

Vol. XIV No. 1 & 2

March, June, 1992

# THE STAR OF THE EAST



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an ecumenical journal dealing specially with  
the oriental and eastern orthodox churches

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An ecumenical journal dealing specially with  
the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches

THE DELHI ORTHODOX CENTRE  
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## BE STRONG IN THE LORD

### Message of the Primates of the Most Holy Orthodox Churches

*The Primates of the Patriarchates and Autocephalous and Autonomous Orthodox Churches met at Phanar in Istanbul, Turkey (13-15 March 1992) to consult on the various problems confronting Orthodoxy today because of the political and religious situation in the East, new technology, and recent developments in ecumenism. On 15 March, the Sunday of Orthodoxy, the Primates offered "a word of exhortation" to the faithful in the message which we present here.*

**IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.  
AMEN.**

1. Gathered together in the Holy Spirit in consultation at the Phanar, today, 15 March 1992, on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, by the initiative and invitation and under the presidency of the First among us, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios, after the expressed will as well of other brother Primates, we, by the mercy and grace of God, the Primates of the local Most Holy Patriarchates and Autocephalous and Autonomous Orthodox Churches:

Bartholomaios, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch;

Parthenios, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa;

Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East;

Diodoros, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem and all Palestine;

Alexy, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia;

Paul, Patriarch of Belgrade and all Serbia;

Teoctist, Patriarch of Bucharest and all Romania;

Maxim, Patriarch of Bucharest and all Bulgaria;

Elias, Archbishop of Metschetis and Tiflis and Catholicos-Patriarch of all Georgia (represented by the Ecumenical Patriarch);

Chrysostomos, Archbishop of Neas Justinianis and all Cyprus (represented by the Patriarch of Alexandria);

Seraphim, Archbishop of Athens and all Greece;

Wasyli, Metropolitan of Warsaw and all Poland;

Dorothej, Metropolitan of Prague and all Czechoslovakia;



John, Archbishop of Karelia and all Finland; have conferred in brotherly love on matters pre-occupying our One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church and have concelebrated the Holy Eucharist in the Patriarchal Church of the Ecumenical Patriarchate on this Sunday which for centuries has been dedicated to Orthodoxy. On this occasion we wish to declare the following:

We offer from the depths of our hearts praise in doxology to the Triune God, who deigned us to see one another face to face, to exchange the kiss of peace and love, to partake of the Cup of Life, and to enjoy the divine gift of Pan-Orthodox unity. Conscious of the responsibility which the Lord's providence has placed upon our shoulders as shepherds of the Church and spiritual leaders, in humility and love we extend to everyone of good will, and especially to our brother bishops and the whole pious body of the Orthodox Church, God's blessing, a kiss of peace and a "word of exhortation" (Heb 13:22).

Rejoice, our brethren, in the Lord Always! (Phil 3:1) Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might (Eph 6:10).

### Problems confronting Orthodoxy

2. The Most Holy Orthodox Church throughout the *oikumene*, sojourning in the world and being inevitably affected by the changes taking place in it, finds herself today confronted with particularly severe and urgent problems which she desires to face as *one body*, adhering to Saint Paul who said: "If one member suffers, all suffer together" (I Cor 12:26). Moreover, looking into the future of human kind and that of the whole of God's creation in light of our entrance into the third millennium A.D. of history, at a time of rapid spiritual and social changes, fulfilling her sacred duty, the Church wishes to bear her own witness, giving account "for the hope that is in us" (1 Pt 3:15) in humility, love and boldness.

The 20th century can be considered the century of great achievements in the field of knowledge concerning the universe and the attempt to subject creation to the human will. During this century the strength as well as the weakness of the human being have surfaced. After such achievements no one doubts any longer that the domination of man over his environment does not necessarily lead to happiness and the fullness of life. Thus, man must have learned that apart from God, scientific and technological progress becomes an instrument of destruction of nature as well as of social life. This is particularly evident after the collapse of the communist system.

Alongside this collapse we must recognize the failure of all anthropocentric ideologies which have created in men of this century a spiritual void and an existential insecurity and have led many people to seek salvation in new religious and para-religious movements, sects, or nearly idolatrous attachments to the material values of this world. Every kind of proselytism practiced today is a manifestation rather than a solution of the existing deep crisis of the contemporary world. The youth of our times have the right to learn that the Gospel of Christ and the Orthodox faith offer love instead of hatred, cooperation instead of confrontation and communion instead of division among human beings and among nations.

### Call to unity

3. All these call the Orthodox to a deeper spiritual as well as canonical unity.

Unfortunately, this unity is often threatened by schismatic groups competing with the canonical structure of the Orthodox Church. Having conferred also on this matter, we realized the need that all the local Most Holy Orthodox Churches, being in full solidarity with one another, condemn these schismatic groups and abstain from any kind of communion with them wherever they may be "until they return," so that the body of the Orthodox Church might not appear divided on this subject, since "not even the blood of martyrdom can erase the sin of schism," and "to tear the Church as under is no less an evil than to fall into heresy" (Saint John Chrysostom).

### Ecumenical problems

4. In this same spirit of concern for the unity of all those who believe in Christ, we have participated in the Ecumenical Movement of our times. This participation was based on the conviction that the Orthodox must contribute to the restoration of unity with all their strength, bearing witness to the one undivided Church of the Apostles the Fathers and the Ecumenical Councils. It was our expectation that during the period of great difficulties the Orthodox Church would have had the right to count on the solidarity — which had constantly been declared as the cardinal ideal of this movement — of all those who believe in Christ.

With great affliction and anguish of heart we realize that certain circles inside the Roman Catholic Church proceed to activities absolutely contrary to the spirit of the dialogue of love and truth. We have sincerely participated in the ecumenical meetings and bilateral theological dialogue. After the collapse of the atheistic communist regime by which many of these orthodox Churches were tremendously persecuted and tormented, we had expected brotherly support, or at least understanding of the difficult situations created after 50 and even 70 years of pitiless persecutions. This situation in many respect is tragic from the point of view of the economic and pastoral resources of the Orthodox Churches concerned.

Instead, to the detriment of the desired journey towards Christian unity, the traditional Orthodox countries have been considered 'missionary territories' and, thus, missionary networks are set up in them and proselytism is practiced with all the methods which have been condemned and rejected for decades by all Christians. In particular, we make mention and condemn the activity of the Uniates under the Church of Rome in the Ukraine, Romania, East Slovakia, the Middle East and elsewhere against our Church. This has created a situation incompatible with the spirit of the dialogue of love and truth, which was initiated and promoted by the Christian leaders, the late Pope John XXIII and the late Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I. This has inflicted a most severe wound on this dialogue making it difficult to heal. In fact this dialogue has already been restricted to the discussion of the problem of Uniatism until agreement is reached on this matter.

The same can be said with regard to certain Protestant fundamentalists, who are eager 'to preach' in Orthodox countries which were under communist regime. The consideration of these countries as *terra missionis*, is unacceptable, since in these countries the Gospel has already been preached for many centuries. It is because of their faith in Christ that the faithful of these countries often sacrificed their very lives.

In reference to this subject, we remind all that every form of proselytism — to be distinguished clearly from evangelization and mission — is absolutely condemned



by the Orthodox. Proselytism, practiced in nations already Christian, and in many cases even Orthodox, sometimes through material enticement and sometimes by various forms of violence, poisons the relations among Christians and destroys the road towards their unity. Mission, in contrast, carried out in non-Christian countries and among non-Christian peoples, constitutes a sacred duty of the Church, worthy of every assistance. Such Orthodox missionary work is carried out today in Asia and Africa and is worthy of every Pan-Orthodox and Pan-Christian support.

### A spirit of reconciliation

5. Moved by the spirit of reconciliation, the Orthodox Church has participated actively for many decades in the effort toward the restoration of Christian unity, which constitutes the express and inviolable command of the Lord (Jn 17:21). The participation of the Orthodox Church as a whole in the World Council of Churches aims precisely at this. It is for this reason that she does not approve of any tendency to undermine this initial aim for the sake of other interests and expediencies. For the same reason the Orthodox strongly disapprove of certain recent developments within the ecumenical context, such as the ordination of women to the priesthood and the use of inclusive language in reference to God, which creates serious obstacles to the restoration of unity.

In the same spirit of reconciliation we express the hope that the progress made in certain dialogues, such as the dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox (non-Chalcedonians) may lead to favourable results once the remaining obstacles have been overcome.

### Dangers of the contemporary world

6. Now, at the end of the second millennium A.D., turning our thoughts more specifically to the general problems of the contemporary world and sharing in the hope, but also in the anxieties of humankind, we observe the following:

The rapid progress of technology and the sciences which provide the instruments for improving the quality of life and relief of pain, misfortune and illnesses, is unfortunately not always accompanied by the analogous spiritual and ethical foundations. As a result, the aforementioned progress is not without serious dangers.

Thus, in human social life, the accumulation of the privileges of this progress and the power proceeding from it to only a section of humanity, exacerbates the misfortune of other people and creates an impetus for agitation or even war. The co-existence of this progress with justice, love and peace is the only safe and sure road, so that this progress will not be transformed from a blessing into a curse in the millennium to come.

Tremendous are also the problems which come out of this progress for man's survival as a free person created in the 'image and likeness' of God. The progress of genetics, although capable of making enormous contributions to combating many diseases, is also capable of transforming the human being from a free person into an object directed and controlled by those in power.

Similar are the dangers for the survival of the natural environment. The careless and self-indulgent use of material creation by man, with the help of scientific and

technological progress, has already started to cause irreparable destruction to natural environment. The Orthodox Church, not being able to remain passive in the face of such destruction, invites through us, all the Orthodox, to dedicate the first day of September of each year, the day of the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, to the offering of prayers and supplications for the preservation of God's creation and the adoption of the attitude to nature, involved in the Eucharist and the ascetic tradition of the Church.

### Shaping a new Europe

7. In view of such tremendous possibilities, as well as dangers, for contemporary humanity, the Orthodox Church hails every progress towards reconciliation and unity. In particular, she hails Europe's journey towards unity and reminds it of the fact that within it live a large number of Orthodox, and it is expected that the Orthodox there will increase in the future. It should not be forgotten that the regions of South and Eastern Europe are inhabited by a majority of Orthodox people, contributing decisively to the cultural moulding of European civilization and spirit. This event renders our Church a significant factor in the moulding of a united Europe and increases her responsibilities.

We are deeply saddened by the fratricidal confrontations between Serbs and Croats in Yugoslavia and for all its victims. We think that what is required from the ecclesiastical leaders of the Roman Catholic Church and from all of us is particular attention, pastoral responsibility, and wisdom from God, in order that the exploitation of religious sentiment for political and national reasons may be avoided.

Our hearts are also sensitive towards all those peoples in other continents, who struggle for their dignity, freedom and development within justice. We pray especially for peace and reconciliation in the area of the Middle East where the Christian faith originated and where people of different faiths co-exist.

### Blessing

8. This, in the love of the Lord, we proclaim on the Great and Holy Sunday of Orthodoxy, urging the pious Orthodox Christians in the *oikumene* to be united around their canonical pastors and calling all those who believe in Christ to reconciliation and solidarity in confronting the serious dangers threatening the world in our time.

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
and the love of God the Father  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all. Amen.

In Phanar,  
on the Sunday of Orthodoxy,  
15 March 1992.  
The Primates of the Orthodox Churches



## IS THE CREATION SACRED ?

(Paulos Gregorios)

### I. The Secular and the Sacred

The concepts of "sacred" and "secular" have a fairly long history in the West. Mircea Eleade, the veteran anthropologist of religion, in his important book on *The Sacred and the Profane*<sup>1</sup>, gives no history of the concept. He simply starts with Rudolf Otto's *Das Heilige (The Idea of the Holy)*<sup>2</sup>. Otto's attempt to define the content of the idea of the Sacred, concentrates on its irrational aspect, the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, and on the feeling of terror and fascination that the manifestation of the Sacred instils in human hearts. The numinous aspect of God's self-disclosure reveals his power and majesty, as something 'wholly other' (*ganz andere*) to human every day experience. It makes the experient feel his or her own insignificance and nothingness.

If we adopt Otto's idea of the Sacred, it will be difficult to regard the creation as sacred or holy. It is part of our daily experience; it does not inspire terror or fascination most of the time. In fact the Holy in this sense is something other than the creation—namely the Creator's hidden presence breaking through in a special manifestation.

Mircea Eleade proceeds beyond Otto to give a more comprehensive definition of the Sacred in its entirety. He defines the Sacred as opposite of the *profane*, and illustrates the contrast from the religious practices and myths of peoples all over the world. His definition stresses the *manifestation* of the Sacred, the *hierophany*, from Greek *to hieron*, the holy, and *phania*, manifestation. In fact he sees all religion as various forms and degrees of hierophany, the Sacred manifesting itself in a stone or tree, or in the person of Jesus Christ. The manifestation of the holy is always a breaking-in of the "other", not something that normally belongs to the tree as tree or man as man.

The general idea in the West is that ordinary experience is profane, and that only the extraordinary can be holy or Sacred, as it breaks through and manifests itself through the ordinary, such as stones, trees and human persons. It is not the created object that is holy, but the transcendent which comes from outside. For Protestant Christians there are very few objects that can be called holy, the Bible being the most notable exception. As the persons, most Protestants will accept the Person of Jesus Christ as holy, and in a derived sense, also regard Christians as holy, but only in the sense that they have been "set apart" from the ordinary run of men and women. Even the old Testament concept of 'holy place' or sanctuary (Hebrew *miqdash* or *qodesh* from *qaddish* = holy) is going out of Protestant vocabulary. And the word 'sanctification' (Greek *hagiasmos*, 1 Cor 1:30, 1 Thess 4:3,4, 2 Thess 2:13, 1 Pet 1:2), which played such an important role in the thought of the Reformers and in subsequent Reformed and Lutheran thought, is now going out of fashion. The fact that the New Testament speaks of Christians as a *Sanctified (hegiasmene)* Rom 15:16, 1 Cor 1:2, Heb 2:11 etc) people is today somewhat embarrassing to many Christians.

We cannot deny the fact that our times are such that there is a resistance, or at least a reluctance, which the word 'hol y' or 'sacred' generates in relation to anything in creation. As Eleade puts it:

"It should be said at once that the *completely* profane world, the wholly desacralized cosmos, is a recent discovery in the history of the human spirit.....; desacralization pervades the entire experience of the non-religious man of modern societies and that, in consequence, he finds it increasingly difficult to rediscover the existential dimensions of religious man in the archaic societies"<sup>3</sup>

Eleade's argument, already presented in his introduction is that "for those who have a religious experience all nature is capable of revealing itself as a cosmic sacrality. The cosmos in its entirety can become a hierophany"<sup>4</sup>

Eleade speaks however, as an anthropologist, as a historian of religions. Our task in this paper is to examine the *Christian* understanding of Creation, whether theologically we should speak of the created order as sacred or as secular. Before we proceed with that examination it will be useful to become cognisant of our own prejudices and inhibitions which may hinder our perceiving reality. The impact of the process of 'secularisation' on a western educated mind should be recognized as a formidable obstacle for clear and straightforward Christian thinking today.

The emphasis on the secular, and on the present age as the only world that matters is the hallmark of the modern establishment, as David Edwards says in *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*.<sup>5</sup> The attempt to re-state Christianity in secular terms, emphasising this world and no other, "behaviour rather than belief, freedom rather than obedience", has to do without the concept of the holy. A 'political theology' will be suspect if it uses concepts like the holy. There is a negative animus, in both liberal western and marxist socialist thought, against priests, cults and the holy (priest - *hiereus*, holy place - *to hieron*). Our secular age cannot recognize a hierophany if there is one. At least the intellectual is anti-clerical, anti-cult, anti-hierarchical, anti-sacral. The younger generation in the west is reacting against this animus and is developing its own clergy, ritual and holy places. But the establishment persists in its irrational negativism to the holy, and it is better that we recognize this before we proceed to the main argument.

### II The Economy of God and the Sacralisation of Creation

In discussing the economy of God, we are elucidating a Judaic-Christian or West Asian religious notion common to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the East Asian religions one finds a different perspective, and the identification of this East Asian perspective can be of some use in understanding the specificity of the Christian position.

We can only point to two basic lines - the Gita of the Hindus and the Tao of the Chinese.

(a) *The Cosmic Vision of the Gita*: The most classical manifestation of the Holy in Hinduism is the manifestation by Krishna to Arjuna inside a chariot in the field of battle. Rudolf Otto may well have taken his cue for the definition of the holy, from this manifestation of Brahman in his *visvarupa* or cosmic form. For it is at once terrifying and fascinating.



In the eleventh chapter of the Gita, Arjuna the war hero, demands of the incarnation of God, of the charioteer of his war chariot.

"I desire to see thy divine form and body,  
oh most noble of all Persons!"

And the Lord Krishna replies:

"Here, today, behold the whole world,  
with all that is moving and unmoving,  
unified in my body, O overcomer of sloth,  
And whatever else you wish to see"

What Arjuna now sees is described thus:

"The Supreme form (*param rupam*) of the Godhead, with many mouths and many eyes, with the vision of many wonders, many divine ornaments, many divine weapons of warfare, robed in many garlands of divine splendour, anointed with many divine perfumes; such is the light of this infinite world-ward divine face that it outshines a thousand suns rising together in heaven. The whole world, with its multitude of divisions, is visible in the body of the God of Gods, the world monstrous and fearsome, orderly and wonderful, sweet and terrifying. Arjuna is overcome with wonder and joy and bows and adores the marvellous and tremendous vision".

The point of this cosmic vision in the Gita is to say that the world as we experience it every day is not its true form. It looks secular, separated from God, self-contained. But that is an illusion created by your senses. Your mental picture of God as somehow outside the cosmos and apart from it is also illusion. The nature of your ordinary vision and ordinary thought is such that you will see God and the world as two separate entities. Only when your inner eye is opened, when vision is granted to you by the grace of God, you see the whole world as but a moment in the being of God, who is constantly destroying and creating. The world process cannot be understood by ordinary perception and ordinary reasoning. It takes the grace of God and the gift of inner vision, for one to be able to see the other aspects of this world which is in the body of God.

You cannot call it either holy or unholy. For this world-ward face of the Divine is only one manifestation adopted to the needs and capacity (even grace-bestowed capacity is limited) of the beholder. It is in the process of coming into being and destroyed. The manifestation is not the final or ultimate form of the divine, but a manifestation of the Time-Spirit, Kala, destroyer of the world. But the point here is that Kala, the Time-spirit or the Secular, is itself God - in one of his many manifestations. That is why, even after this terrifying vision, Arjuna has to beg:

"The unseen has now been seen, and I am happy; but my mind is also troubled. O Lord God, show me Thy other form, and be gracious to me O Lord of God, abode of the universe". (11:45)

And Krishna transforms himself to the more familiar form of a compassionate, friendly forgiving, kindly, human God, which is our common perception of God. But there is no question of sacred or secular as two categories.

(b) *The Unity of Opposites - the Tao*: In the Taoist perception there is no need for a special vision, and no special category of the holy. The whole of reality, with its two poles of Yin and Yang, is divine. It is a process of flow and change, in cycles that ceaselessly repeat themselves in time. Whether it is worship or science, prayer or technology, all proceed from the Yin-Yang cyclical dialectic. The Yin aspect of reality develops to a point and then retreats, in order that the Yang may now develop. Sickness or social disorder results when there is an imbalance between the two poles or principles. Yin is basically feminine, inward, soft, moist and receptive, while Yang is male, out-going, hard, dry, aggressive, and demanding. All people whether male or female have both Yin and Yang aspects. But both principles are active in all reality; they account for change, motion and activity. Tao is the way of these two principles. The whole 'creation' (to use a Judaeo-Christian term) is moved by the Tao. But human persons can act in harmony with the Tao or against it. Though the Tao is all activity, all activity is not in accordance with the Tao.

Once again, there is no notion of the secular or sacred. In the Western tradition Stoicism comes closest to Taoism, and was probably influenced by knowledge of Chinese Tao. God is not separate from the cosmos. The universe is the manifestation or the body of God. In such a conception there is no room for notions like sacred and secular.

### III. The Christian Perspective - the terms

It is useful perhaps to recognise that the classical christian vocabulary does not provide terms like secular in our sense. But Holy or Sacred is a specifically Judaeo-Christian word. The Hebrew word is *qadosh* and the adjective was used for:

- (a) God, as separate, transcendent, sinless, perfect, awe-inspiring;
- (b) persons set apart for the exclusive service of God - priests, saints, angels etc;
- (c) places set apart for the worship of God - temples, tabernacles, sanctuaries;
- (d) objects set apart for God's service, vessels, ark of the covenant, altars, sacrifices etc. and
- (e) times set apart for God-Sabbath, festivals etc.

Except in the case of God, other persons, places, times, and objects become holy by an act of consecration. This means that the non-consecrated persons and places and times and objects are not regarded as holy. The people of Israel as a whole may be regarded as holy, (Jeremiah 2:3; Ps 114:2; Isaiah 62:12, 63:18; Deut 12:7 etc.), but that is by virtue of their being a special people set apart or consecrated for God.

The word for secular would have to be, in Hebrew, the adjective of '*Olam*, which means age, world, long duration of time; but the adjective was rarely used. In any case that which was consecrated or holy was not opposed to the '*olam*, and there was no equivalent to the western word 'profane', which comes from pro-fanum. *Fanum* in Latin means shrine or sanctuary or temple. And *pro* can be used to mean 'outside'. So profane comes to mean unholy, not sacred. But *saeculum* or its adjective was not used in the Latin to denote profane or not holy. In the Hebrew language one can speak of *chol* or *chahal* meaning the opposite of *qadosh*. God's holy name can be pro-faned among the nations (Ezek 36:23; 39:7); but also one's father's bed can be defiled or made unholy (*chahal*, 1 Chron 5:1). This means that the father's bed is holy; all relations among the holy people are holy.



But this profaning applies only to a de-sacralisation of something which is already sacred. There is no notion of secularisation in the Scriptures. That notion is a creation of the Western church, arising from a distinction which arose in the west and spread to the rest of Christendom.

\* This distinction in the west, however, was not between secular and sacred, but rather between secular and regular. In Syriac, where this distinction seems to have been taken over from the west, is between *olmoyo* and *dairoyo*, which in English would be worldly and monastic. Latin 'regular' also means monastic, i.e. those bound by a *regula*, an order a set of rules. The clergy, especially in the west, were divided into secular (living and serving in the saeculum or time-world) and regular (living by a *regula* in the eschatological sphere having renounced the saeculum).

It is this distinction between world (secular) and monastic rather than the one between secular and sacred, that originally lay behind the process of secularisation in Europe. The confiscation of monastic property by the state and the liberation of institutions from monastic control were the primary aspects of secularisation. The word secular, first meant not related to a monastery or under its control. This special meaning of the word secular is an accident of French history from which too many people now suffer great confusion.

Christians cannot use Sacred and Secular as categories opposed to each other. Sacred and profane may still be valid, though this too is doubtful. In any case the question whether the creation is secular or sacred is meaningless.

But it will be useful to understand, from a Christian point of view, the status of the creation before God.

#### IV. A Christian Understanding of Creation - Some basic affirmations

While it is senseless to ask the question whether the Creation is secular or sacred, mostly because the meaning of the word 'secular' is nebulous and unclear, we should proceed to examine the status of the creation in Christian understanding, and to see the extent to which it is holy or sacred, since these latter are genuinely Christian terms.

The Christian teaching affirms the following axia about the creation:

1. The world is created; this means it is not self-existent, but contingent upon the will of God.
2. The world is created *ex nihilo*; there was no world before it was created; but time itself begins with the world. Nothing is prior to the creation except the eternal being of God the Father, Son and Holy spirit.
3. The universe is not eternal. It has come into being out of nothing and is capable of going out of existence altogether. The Creator and the Creation are not consubstantial with each other.
4. The creation is a dynamic process, with a beginning, a middle process and an end. Change is its essential characteristic. Time itself is a time of change and not of unchanging being.
5. While from our time-space human perspective creation has time with beginning middle and end (*arche*, *hodos* and *telos*), from God's perspective it is present to Him in its totality, from beginning to end.<sup>6</sup>

6. The foundation of the created order is thus in the will, the word, the wisdom, and the power of God. It is because God wills that the creation exists. Withdraw that will and the creation becomes the non-being from which it came.<sup>7</sup> All that exists by the will of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. All human beings also. But all existence is poised between two possibilities - to adhere to the will and wisdom of God and thus to endure, or to go against that will and go back to the non-being from which it originally came. This is one aspect of freedom in creation.
7. The creation is an integral whole, in which humanity, made in the Image of God, is the crown. The Fall of man as well as the Redemption of man are chapters in the history of the Creation, and can be understood only in the context of that creation. To understand the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity as related only to the salvation of souls is fundamentally to misunderstand the mighty acts of God in Christ. It was in Christ that the creation came to be (Jn. 1:3), and it is in Christ that all things are to be fulfilled, reconciled and reunited (Col. 1:20; Eph 1:10). The creation of man and of the rest of creation are integral to each other. So are the redemption of man and the redemption of the rest of creation (Roman 8:19ff). The creation is now subject to death, along with human beings. But the redemption of humanity must involve some form of participation for the rest of creation in the new God-given eternal life of humanity.

#### V. A Perspective on the Sacredness of Creation

What we know now is the fallen creation, from the perspective of a fallen human being. In a world to come where time is not bounded by death, and the body and mind are also reconstituted in the resurrection, we will certainly see the creation in a different perspective. Our scientific understanding of the created order is only one limited perspective, largely conditioned by our time-space concepts and by our awkward and often unsuccessful attempts to transcend time and space in our thoughts.

But for the moment even our theological discourse has to be in space-time categories. It is from that space-time perspective that we say:

"From our Christian view point, the only way we can understand the Creation is that our existence as well as the existence of the rest of the universe is an act of the Grace of God. So in our redemption in Jesus Christ. Both creation and Redemption are from Grace. It is not the case that one is nature and the other is grace".

"The Christian perspective demands that we see the creation as created, fallen and redeemed, living in hope of final fulfilment. Our hope for the full manifestation of our redemption in Christ Jesus should include our hope for the redemption of all things and of the whole universe, to be united in Jesus Christ".

#### Conclusion

It is pointless to ask whether the Creation is sacred or secular. It is secular in the sense that it is set in time or in the seculum. But it is not secular in the sense that it can exist independently of God. It is highly misleading for Christians to talk about the secularity of creation.



As for holiness, this is strictly an attribute of God, in fact the central attribute of God, which the angels in heaven constantly affirm, but singing "holy, holy, holy". Holiness cannot be defined. Not even as 'set apart'. It means the being and intrinsic nature of God Himself.

What the creation *can* have is secondary holiness, holiness by attribution, holiness as imparted by God. The creation is *not* holy by virtue of its being created by God. It is a fallen creation. In the fallen creation, the holiness of God can be antitypically or symbolically manifested, in varying degrees (see Mt 23:19) through consecrated times, objects, space, and persons.

There is a special call to Christians to be holy:

"As he who has called you is holy, so also you should be holy in all your way of life; for it is written: Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet 1:15,16)

There is a call for the whole Church to be holy:

"The temple of God is holy, which temple You (plural) are" (1 Cor 3:17)

When we pray, "hallowed (made holy) by Thy name," (LK 11:2) we are praying that the bearers of God's name on earth should be holy. It is the same thing which St. Paul asks us - to present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice (Rom 12:1). God has called us to holiness (1 Thess 4:3,7), and we are made holy by the Spirit (1 Pet 1:2, Heb 10:14; 1 Cor 6:11, 1 Cor 1:2,3 etc.).

Ultimately the creation itself can come to share in this holiness when its redemption is completed and it is liberated from bondage to decay and death. Then it becomes fully a manifestation of God. Then it shares in God's holiness by attribution, association and consecration.

Whatever holiness the creation today has is a proleptic aspect of its final eschatological nature, to be the sanctuary of God. This is now manifested in the sanctification of places, times, people and objects to be holy and set apart for God. The very fact that they have to be set apart, means that the rest of the universe is not yet fully holy. But just as when Saul and Barnabas were set apart by the Spirit, they were taken from a community which had already been made holy (sanctified) by the Word and the Spirit, the fact that things, places, times and persons in creation are specially set apart for God, does not necessarily imply that the rest of the creation is unholy.

The holiness of creation shall be made manifest only on the last day when the heavenly city, the city of God, holy Jerusalem shall be fully manifested.

## Notes

1. Original French 1957 Eng. Tr. by W.R. Trask, Harper Torchbooks. Harper and Row, New York and Evanston, 1961 256 pp.
2. Original German Breslau 1917 Eng. Tr. *The Idea of the Holy*, London, 1923, revised ed. 1929.
3. M. Eleade, *The Sacred and the Profane* p. 13.
4. *Ibid.* p.12
5. Ed. Alan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass, Fontana/Collins, 1977, p. 564, *Sub vocum secularization*
6. Gregory of Nyssa says:

Since human life proceeds by extension, from some kind of beginning to some kind of an end, and our life here is divided into a part of which we grasp by memory and a future which we apprehend in hope or anticipation, we incorrectly apply the thought to the transcendent God as having a past and a future as if he too existed in the extension of time".

*Contra Eunomium* XII. PG 46: 1064 C

Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers series Two, Vol V: 296. About change, these are his words:

"Everything that subsists through creation has connection with change, in as much as the subsistence itself of the creation had its rise in change, that which was not, passing by the Divine power into that which is" (*Catechetica Megala*: VI PG 45: NPNF. Two V:481)

See also *de opificio hominis*: XVI: 14, PG 44:184 NPNF. Two V: 406

7. Gregory of Nyssa's classical statement on this is in his *In Hexaemeron*: *Proemium* PG 44:69A.

For an English translation see my *Cosmic Man* p. 96



## ‘PREPARING FOR RIO’: IRFWP DECLARATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

*The Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace brought us together, in London, on May 1st and 2nd, 1992, from seven different religious traditions of the world - Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh, to reflect specifically on the possible contributions of the world religions to the agenda of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from June 3rd to 12th, 1992.*

### 1. The Earth as Mother

Some of our traditions - especially the Hindu and the Sikh - regard the earth as our mother. She brings forth humanity, sustains and nourishes us, gives us all we need. If the earth is our mother, then she is no one's property; she is *our* mother, but not *our property*. Respect, affection and gratitude are due to her. We should not take from her more than what we need. She is not to be dominated or exploited, but to be tended and cared for. She cares also for her other children, birds and animals, fish and flowers, trees and plants, air and water, land and sky.

### 2. Reality is One

Ultimate Reality is one, though sages describe it differently. Religions are different, but the reality to which they seek to relate is one. We are *in* that Reality - human beings as well as the rest of the universe. There is nothing in the universe that is not contingent upon that Reality for its existence. All life is a special manifestation or creation of that Reality - to be revered and treated with respect and care. Where that contingent nature of our existence is forgotten, and humanity arrogates to itself lordship and dominion over the earth, catastrophe ensues.

### 3. Reality and the Secular

Our modern civilization adopts a secular pose. Religion is relegated to the private realm of personal choices. The public realm, especially the State system, including political economy, public education and public health, claims to be secular, or unrelated to and separated from religion.

This implies that in the public realm at least, meaning and significance is sought without reference to anything transcending the world that our senses can experience. That world is assumed to be self-existent, self-contained and self-sustaining.

This world-view was once claimed to be the scientific world-view. But it has no scientific basis; it is a dogmatic assumption unsupported by evidence. A radical

revision of the secular, so-called scientific, perspective on reality is a necessary part of the solution to the ecological problem.

### 4. Religion and the Environment

All religions claim that the world can be healthy only when it is sustained by love and compassion, by justice and peace, by a moral and spiritual order which undergirds the political, economic and social realms of human existence. When that moral and spiritual order is violated or disrupted, the consequences appear in the form of social, political and economic injustice, of eruptions of war and violence, terrorism and aggression, of ecological disruption and catastrophe.

Humanity and the world are interdependent. Both are dependent on the Transcendent, by whatever name we call it - Sunya or Brahma, God or Allah, the Tao or the Absolute, the Guru or the Lord. Humanity is responsible for the world's well-being. The universe interacts with us, and when we are violent and aggressive towards it, or act negligently and irresponsibly in caring for it, it hits back sooner or later, as we have seen.

The earth is not there to plunder and abuse according to humanity's greed and lust. It demands respect and care; and we have to share this planet with other forms of life, for which we have a responsibility.

### 5. Can the Environmental Problem find a Technological Solution?

Religious people are convinced that while technological measures are necessary to reduce pollution, to dispose of wastes in ways that do not disrupt the eco-balance, to keep the carbon-dioxide level in the atmosphere from rising above safe limits, to reduce the consumption of hydro-fluoro-carbons and to conserve the ozone layer, to regulate the wise consumption of the finite resources on the earth, to prevent deforestation and to promote afforestation, and so on, the ultimate solution has to go beyond - to bring about radical changes in human perceptions, attitudes and practices. It is in this latter sphere that the world religions can make their most significant contributions - both by healthy attitudes and practices, and also by generating the healing spiritual energies born of prayer and discipline, renunciation and sacrifice.

### 6. Science/Technology and Religion

For the last two hundred years Science/Technology and Religion have often taken antagonistic stances towards each other. Science claimed once that God as a hypothesis was unnecessary for it, that it could make sense of reality without that hypothesis, in a purely secular context. This was the ground on which religion was banished from the public realm - leading to the separation of State and Religion, the secularisation of education and medicine, the reduction of knowledge to what is obtained by the empirical-rational methods of science.

Religion in turn often reacted to its marginalization by becoming insular as well as wilfully and arrogantly anti-scientific - especially when its colossal spiritual attainments were seen to be eclipsed by the dramatic achievements of modern science/technology. Religious leadership often became more chauvinistic, reactionary and narrowly communal and exclusivist, and neglected its responsibility to take advantage of the advances in scientific knowledge, and to care for all people and all life.



This need no longer be the case. Science now seems modest enough to acknowledge that its knowledge is limited, relative and operational, that it cannot answer most questions about the meaning of life or decide on daily ethical choices for persons and societies. Science can give us precise information, and technology ■ give us important skills; they can open for us significant computing and operational possibilities.

We as religious leaders know also that we cannot by ourselves solve the ecological problem. We can only offer to co-operate with others in finding and implementing solutions. We have much to learn from modern science and technology. But we want others to know that we are also concerned with the ecological disaster facing humanity, and would contribute some insights from our own traditions to ■ holistic solution.

### 7. We propose a few steps that we could not take together:-

- (a) Scientists, philosophers and religious thinkers should soon set up an international inter-religious committee to formulate a set of middle axioms about human conduct towards each other and towards the rest of the universe: e.g. respect for all life including animal and plant world; self-discipline and limits to consumption, regulation of greed and the passions of mind and body; simple guidelines about what to destroy and what to conserve; and so on. The formulation of these middle axioms should be done on the basis of high urgency. These should then find their way into school text-books and the media.
- (b) We plan to produce a separate anthology of the wise sayings of the great spiritual leaders, past and present, of all the religions, in relation to our responsibility towards each other, to all life and to the planet.
- (c) The home and the school are where basic attitudes are formed towards others and towards life. There should be ■ major study soon on how to monitor the processes which form basic attitudes in children, and how to correct them. For environmental progress, attitude-formation in home and school seems fundamental.
- (d) Spiritual leaders should work with others on the ethics of growth and development, ■ the way standards are set in terms of percentage allotment of Gross Domestic Product, on criticizing assumptions about economic growth ■ the foundation of all growth and development, on possible alternative measures of growth in human development and in the quality of life.
- (e) Spiritual leaders from all religions should soon come together, with informed experts, to consider: why, even when the cold war is supposed to be over, the promised peace dividend does not seem to be coming forth; why the money wasted on armaments cannot be diverted soon to developing alternative sources of renewable energy, to desalination projects and provision of fresh water supply to desert peoples and rural masses, to scientific research for devising ■ way of life that is less hostile to the environment; why the military production plants cannot soon be converted to produce the basic needs of humanity.

- (f) Spiritual leaders of the world religions should promote the publication of pamphlets on subjects of environmental importance like
  - (a) planting and nurturing of trees;
  - (b) reducing wasteful consumption;
  - (c) monitoring of advertisements and packaging, and their role in increasing cupidity and useless consumption;
  - (d) the control of the public media by big business through advertisements and subsidies;
  - (e) the advantages for the environment and for human health of reducing the amount of animal meat in human nourishment;
  - (f) the ethics of affluence and poverty;
  - (g) techniques of meditation, self-control and regulation of desire.

8. There is much work for religious people to do, in co-operation with others. Religion should win its way back to the centre of public life, not to exercise power over others, but to serve all in the spirit of humility, compassion, renunciation, self-sacrifice and self-discipline. That seems necessary for the healing of our planet and the biosphere.

This statement was the fruit of the inter-religious colloquy held in London on May 1st - 2nd, 1992 under the chairmanship of Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, President of the Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace. The co-convenors of the Colloquy were Dr Francis Clark, Secretary-General of IRFWP and Dr Frank Kaufmann, Executive Director of IRFWP. The spokesmen for the different religions were ■ follows:

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Buddhist:  | Venerable Dr. Medagama Vajiragnana,<br>Mahasangha Nayaka (Buddhist Primate) of Great Britain, London<br>Buddhist Vihara, Chiswick   |
| Christian: | Metropolitan Dr Paulos Mar Gregorios,<br>Bishop of Delhi and the North in the Orthodox Church of India,<br>President of the Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace, former<br>President of the World council of Churches. |
| Hindu:     | Swami Nirliptananda, Director of Bharat Sevashram Sangha Temple,<br>Shepherds Bush, London W. 12  |
| Jain:      | Dr Natubhai Shah, President of the Jain Centre, Leicester   |
| Jewish:    | Rabbi David Goldberg, The Liberal Jewish<br>Synagogue, St John's Wood Road, London NW8  |
| Muslim:    | Dr M.A. Zaki Badawi, Chairman of the Imams and Mosques Council<br>of Great Britain, Principal of the Muslim College, London   |
| Sikh:      | Dr Gobind Singh Mansukhani, President of Kendri Singh Sabha, U.K.;<br>former Deputy Secretary of Education, Government of India, and<br>Professor of Delhi University.  |



## THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES AND THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

*One positive result of the Canberra Assembly of the World Council of Churches this year was that it provoked the Orthodox into producing what is perhaps their best statement yet on the position of the Eastern Churches in the ecumenical movement. It was prepared jointly by the Byzantine and the Oriental Orthodox, thereby underlining their fundamental unity, and has a firmness and clarity which cannot always be achieved in joint endeavours.*

Representatives of Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches have met in the Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Chambesy, Switzerland, 12-16 September 1991. Their task was to reflect ■ their relations with the World Council of Churches. They have done this in response to their experience at the Seventh Assembly of the WCC, held in Canberra, Australia, in February 1991, and in accordance with the intention expressed in their 'reflection paper' addressed to the participants of the Assembly. This document briefly addressed certain theological, ecclesiological and organizational aspects concerning the involvement of the Orthodox Churches in the ecumenical movement, and in the WCC in particular. The Report of the Consultation is presented under three headings: (1) presuppositions of involvement for the Orthodox in the ecumenical movement and the WCC, (2) some problems for the Orthodox in the WCC, and (3) towards an improved Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement.

### I. Presuppositions of Involvement for the Orthodox in the Ecumenical Movement and the World Council of Churches

1. For the Orthodox, Eastern and Oriental, *the primary purpose of the World Council of Churches is its work for the restoration of unity among Christians.* In the Orthodox understanding, this means full ecclesial unity, that is, unity in doctrinal teaching, sacramental life and polity. The Orthodox recognize other important dimensions of ecumenical work and activity. Cooperative ecumenical efforts that contribute toward growing unity, the establishment or restoration of justice and peace, toward coherence in theological expression, toward mission and common witness, toward deepening the churches' self-understanding and toward growth of community in confessing, learning and service are important in themselves and as means for divided Christians to move toward ultimate doctrinal and sacramental union. But for the Orthodox, the ultimate goal and justification of the ecumenical movement in general, and for their participation in the WCC in particular, is the full ecclesial unity of Christians. It is thus an urgent task for the meaning of church unity to be clearly articulated and frequently repeated in the deliberations and work of the WCC, while concurrently striving to clarify appropriate and legitimate aspects of diversity in expressing the apostolic faith in worship and discipline within that ecclesial unity.

2. Toward this purpose, the Orthodox call all Christians and member churches, all WCC programme units and administrative organs to 'a re-commitment to the constitutional "Basis" of the existence and work of the Council. The *Basis Statement* of the WCC is: 'The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.' This fundamental statement highlights the Trinitarian, Incarnational and salvific understanding of Christian faith, worship and life in the response of Christians to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The Orthodox affirm it and insist on its centrality for the Christian churches gathered in fellowship for the purpose of working toward uniting all Christians. The *Basis* should be repeatedly displayed and frequently re-affirmed in the undertakings of the WCC so that all involved in its work and activities ■ constantly reminded of its contents.

3. In particular, the *Basis* and the Christian teaching historically related to it should provide the *theological underpinning of ecumenical reflection* within the WCC and the documents and statements issued in its name. These fundamental Christian truths have come to the Church from God through the scriptures as divine revelation. We refer to the central affirmations of the apostolic faith and the credal statements of the Early Church, such as the Trinitarian understanding of God, the divine-human personhood of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of redemption and salvation in the work of Jesus Christ, the creation and calling of human kind ■ the image and likeness of God, the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in Church, etc. These fundamental beliefs of revelation need to be repeatedly referred to as such and respected by the WCC and its participants, and kept at the centre of WCC thinking and activities. Violations of the *Basis* and the concomitant faith affirmations arising from divine revelation as understood and taught in the historical undivided Church should be corrected or not admitted in the official work of the WCC.

4. The Orthodox Churches participate in the WCC's life and activities *only* on the understanding that the WCC 'is a council of churches' (*koinonia/fellowship/conseil*) and not a council of individuals, groups, movements or religious bodies which are involved in the Council's goal, tasks and vision.

5. They consider seriously that their membership and participation in the WCC is based upon an encounter, cooperation and ■ *dialogue of churches*. The WCC cannot become a forum for the exchange of individual ideas. We together with other churches seek '... a conciliar fellowship of local churches which are themselves truly united...' and aim '... at maintaining sustained and sustaining relationships with [their] sister churches, expressed in conciliar gatherings wherever required for fulfilment of their common calling.' (Nairobi Assembly 1975).

6. Participating thus in a dialogue structure, the Orthodox Churches should be the only responsible agents for their own *representation*. Each member church has the right to decide how ■ be represented, ■ accordance with the criteria that apply to a council of churches. These decisions are made on an equal basis with the other member churches in respect to quotas, voting procedures, church polity issues, etc.

7. The Orthodox Churches strongly re-affirm that *doctrinal issues* in the WCC structures should be considered ■ an essential element of each church's membership. Such doctrinal or ecclesiological issues cannot be decided through ■ voting or



parliamentary procedure (cf. WCC Constitution and Rules, XV/6,b). For the Orthodox, issues such as ordination of women, eucharistic hospitality, inclusive language with reference to God, are doctrinal.

8. In the past the Orthodox felt obliged to make their own 'separate statements' on matters debated in the WCC. In the last decades, growing together in ecumenical fellowship, they abandoned this practice and took part in the production of common statements. The present situation causes some uneasiness among the Orthodox. This has led them to issue some reminders about the basic criteria of their participation. Some suggest a resumption of 'separate statements' because the Orthodox point of view is insufficiently reflected. Most feel that separate statements would be unfortunate for the nature of ecumenical work. New ways have to be found to implement the Orthodox view in drafting committees, issue-related consultations and WCC governing bodies.

9. Another source of uneasiness is the fact that membership in the Council of non-Orthodox churches is constantly increasing, thus rendering the Orthodox witness more difficult. The process of receiving new member churches and their representation in the Central Committee and Assemblies of the WCC deserves serious consideration.

10. The WCC describes itself, its ecclesial nature and significance by means of its *Basis* and with the safeguard of the *Toronto Statement* of the Central Committee on 'The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches' (1950). There it is clearly affirmed: 'The member churches of the WCC consider the relationship of other churches to the Holy Catholic Church which the Creeds profess as a subject for mutual consideration. Nevertheless, membership does not imply that each church must regard the other member churches as churches in the true and full sense of the word.'

11. Our understanding of this statement is that the member churches of the WCC, and the Orthodox churches in particular, respect the sovereignty of each other's ecclesiological teachings. The Council has no ecclesiological position of its own.

12. The Orthodox perceive that the WCC is drifting away from the *Toronto Statement* through some of its programmes and methodologies. For us the *Toronto Statement* remains an essential criterion for our participation and membership in the WCC. Any eventual re-assessment of the *Toronto Statement* in the light of the experience of the forty years in the ecumenical movement should not undermine or contradict this fundamental criterion.

13. The Orthodox have a common understanding in relation to their participation in the WCC. They follow the recommendations of the Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference (1986): 'The Orthodox Church ... faithful to her ecclesiology, to the identity of her internal structure and to the teaching of the undivided Church, while participating in the WCC, does not accept the idea of the "equality of concessions" and cannot consider Church unity as an inter-confessional adjustment. In this spirit, the unity which is sought within the WCC cannot simply be the product of theological agreements. God alone calls every Christian to the unity of faith which is lived in the sacraments and the tradition, as experienced in the Orthodox Church.' (para. 6).

14. The Orthodox Church believes its own teaching and hierarchical structure to be based on an unbroken Tradition, which has been transmitted from generation since the Apostolic times through the centuries. It participates in bilateral and multilateral dialogues through the WCC and the ecumenical movement. It does this because it is committed to the search for Christian unity. Therefore its presence and active participation is not merely a matter of 'courtesy'.

15. 'The Orthodox Church, which unceasingly prays "for the union of all", has taken part in the ecumenical movement since its inception and has contributed to its formation and further development. In fact, the Orthodox Church, due to the ecumenical spirit by which she is distinguished, has, throughout history, fought for the restoration of Christian unity. Therefore, the Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement does not run counter to the nature and history of the Orthodox Church. It constitutes the consistent expression of the apostolic faith within new historical conditions, in order to respond to new existential demands.' (Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, 1986, para. 6)

16. The Orthodox Churches understand the WCC as churches gathered in faithfulness to the calling of the Holy Spirit that we are all invoking. The WCC in a unique way has become part of the life and experience of our churches.

## II. Some Problems for the Orthodox in the WCC

17. It is in this spirit that the Orthodox consider the issue of the involvement of the WCC with other religions. Commitment to dialogue among Churches with the goal of the unity of all Christians can and should be extended to dialogue with other religious traditions. The Orthodox have a long and living experience with members of other religions. Respect for the humanity of other and their sincerely held convictions calls for increased efforts at understanding and peaceful relations, and, wherever possible and appropriate, cooperation in areas of mutual concern. But this cannot mean that Christian churches acting through WCC agencies should be compromised in their central Christian commitments. The Orthodox hold that any syncretistic accommodations in WCC activities is inappropriate and contradicts the central affirmations and goals of the ecumenical endeavours. In particular, the recent practice of having representatives of other faith traditions at Assemblies and other ecumenical endeavour is welcomed, so long as the representatives of other religions are not invited to serve on drafting committees for the preparation of WCC documents. The dialogue with other religions ought not to compromise the identity of the WCC as a council of Christian churches, as it serves to broaden the understanding of the member churches regarding the variety of religious and non-religious stances in the world today and in promoting dialogue between Christians and members of other religions.

18. The Orthodox welcome the efforts of the WCC to address the question of the relationship of the churches to the world and are grateful for the many opportunities given us to explore that relationship in programmes such as 'Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation'. However, the theme of the Seventh Assembly, 'Come, Holy Spirit - Renew the Whole Creation', as it was developed in some expressions, provokes us to express convictions about the topic. The Orthodox understand the Kingdom of God as God's ruling power over the whole world. The saving work of



Jesus Christ has broken the power of evil and the demonic in the world, and the work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest God's Kingdom and lordship as an active reality transforming and transfiguring the world to the full service of God and His purposes. Thus, the whole creation is sustained and renewed by the Holy Spirit. However, the Holy Spirit dwells uniquely and in fulness in the life of the Church enabling the fulness of communion between God and humanity together with the rest of creation. The Orthodox hold that extreme emphasis on either of these poles is ■ distortion of the Christian faith and would call upon the WCC to cultivate an awareness in its deliberations of the Holy Spirit's action both within the Church and in the whole of creation. Further, acknowledgment of the Holy Spirit's leading of the churches to new and fresh understandings and experiences ought not to be presented as invalidating or contradicting the guidance of the Holy Spirit given to the Church in the past as embodied in the Church's Tradition. God's Kingdom is a reality already present, but which must also be progressively fulfilled and revealed. We urge the WCC through its agencies not to allow itself to succumb to extremist tendencies in either direction when it considers the relationship of the churches to the world.

19. The Orthodox Tradition is full of examples of involvement in *activities of a social character* and in an active defense of the dignity of the human person. This is recalled in the 'Decisions of the Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference' where it is stated that 'The Orthodox Church appreciates this multidimensional activity of the WCC and fully cooperates in [these] fields, within the limits of her possibilities' (para. 9). However, on several occasions, the Orthodox have had to react against ■ tendency within the WCC towards a one-sided 'horizontalism' which tends to disconnect social, political, environmental problems from our commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Such one-sided horizontalism suggests ■ acceptance of ■ autonomy of secular life. The Orthodox believe that no aspect of life is autonomous or disconnected from the Christians' confession of the Incarnation and its consequences: the gift of the divine life in the image of the Holy Trinity. It is because we believe in the Incarnation and the Trinity that we are committed to problems of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

20. The Orthodox must once again reiterate their position *on the meaning of the eucharistic communion as it regards the nature of the Church and the ecumenical endeavour*. The Eucharist is the supreme expression of the unity of the Church and not a means towards Christian unity. Shared belief, shared ecclesial order, shared ecclesial identity are manifested and expressed in their fulness through the Eucharist. Given this understanding of the Eucharist there is only Eucharistic Communion, and there cannot be something called 'Inter-communion' since that term together with the practice it designates is a contradiction. To share in the common cup while still maintaining fundamental differences in faith, order and ministry does not make sense to the Orthodox, because it violates a major element of the meaning and significance of the Eucharist. We genuinely suffer about the fact that sharing the chalice is not yet possible in our ecumenical striving and regret misunderstandings on this matter which may have occurred during our ecumenical pilgrimage in the WCC. Thus, in our presently still divided condition, the Orthodox may not in conscience extend or respond to invitations involving 'eucharistic hospitality'. We look forward to the day when our shared faith, order and fellowship will require and permit sharing the common cup as the highest manifestation of our unity.

### III. Towards an Improved Orthodox Participation in the Ecumenical Movement

21. The Orthodox Church ■ a *koinonia* of local churches transmits the teaching of the Church to the people of God (*pleroma*) on the *local and regional levels*. Its contribution to the ecumenical vision can only be articulated and fulfilled when it is involved on the 'ground' level sharing and exchanging relationships with other Christian churches and movements in a common action, witness, concerns, etc.

22. The Orthodox think that their participation in the ecumenical movement would be greatly improved if more attention were devoted to a *preparation of clergy and laymen and women in ecumenical issues*. Living as we do in pluralistic societies, all aspects of our Christian life have ■ ecumenical dimension which requires training and education at all levels. Ecumenical participation would also be helped if the Orthodox learned to know more about one another to make inter-Orthodox collaboration more fruitful.

23. In the last decades, there has been ■ *new interest in the Orthodox faith* on the part of many. It is the duty of the Orthodox to respond to this by taking very seriously their responsibility to witness to Orthodoxy in its purity. This implies a permanent distinction between the fundamental and the secondary, ■ continuous effort to live in accordance with the doctrines confessed in the concrete aspects of daily life. In other words, an improved Orthodox participation in the ecumenical search for the unity of Christians so that our witness to the world may be credible implies a continuous conversion of the Orthodox to a permanently purified Orthodoxy.

24. The process of a continuous deepening of their own Orthodoxy should lead the Orthodox not simply to respond to the questioning of an ever renewed historical context but to take *initiatives* themselves in many areas of modern life. This would certainly contribute to improve Orthodox involvement in the WCC and prevent some of the misunderstandings that the Orthodox ■ often deplore.

25. It is our belief that the Orthodox have much to contribute in the ecumenical movement. It is therefore highly desirable that they develop more and more a *witnessing, missionary mentality*.

26. This is all the more necessary in a context where *proselytism* in various forms is rife. Many Orthodox churches, due to persecution, have been weakened and their weakness is a prey to these various forms of proselytism. The latter should be denounced with utmost vigour. In particular, the Orthodox should call their partners in ecumenical dialogue to denounce themselves the unfair action of some of their own 'missionaries', thus avoiding ■ flagrant contradiction between official language among 'sister churches' called to a 'common witness' and actual practice which amounts to 'unchurching' the Orthodox Christians.

27. However, apart from the indispensable protests, the most potent answer to these deplorable situations is a recovery of a purified, well-informed, responsible Orthodoxy on the part of the Orthodox concerned. In carrying this work, they need the help of all, in particular the assurance of their partner in the WCC.

'May we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, be sustained to renew the commitment of all Christians towards the visible unity.'



## ORTHODOX-CATHOLIC RELATIONS

*Archbishop Weakland has chaired the Orthodox-Roman Catholic on behalf of the bishops of the United States since dialogue first began in 1981. From that long experience, he reflects on the current tenseness in relations between the Churches, but characterizing them as "challenges" and as hopeful occasions for progress.*

### Challenges and Hopes

(Rembert G. Weakland, Archbishop of Milwaukee\*)

#### Challenges

The general impression that the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church ■ at odds right now is understandable. Concerns raised by Orthodox leaders took center stage during the Special Assembly for Europe of the Synod of Bishops (28 Nov-14 Dec. 1991). In the last months of 1991, Orthodox authorities complained about Catholic activities in Romania, Eastern Slovakia, Ukraine, the cities of Russia and even the far corners of Eastern Siberia. News reports on these regions and on situations in the Balkans, especially the fighting in Croatia, contain references to Catholic-Orthodox troubles. Will tensions and disputes be the singular story of Orthodox-Catholic relations? Will two decades of dialogue end in futile accusations and debates?

Rather, one could ask: What would the grand architects of Orthodox-Catholic relations of 20-some years ago say about the current state of affairs? Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople and Pope Paul VI (their warm embrace in 1965 still remains a stunning picture in our memories), Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg), the incompleteness of the message being diffused and would cite the need to put the present crisis in perspective. They could point out how much relations have improved and could give any number of uplifting stories to balance the appallingly negative, but still realistic, current news.

#### Positive Signs

Among positive signs one could bring up the personages now involved. The election of Patriarch Bartholomaios to the chair once occupied by Athenagoras will be most important. A person who knows the West well. Who speaks many languages, and who is recognized for his ecumenical participation, the new patriarch will certainly have ■ dominant influence on future dialogues. I have known Metropolitan Kirill, head of External Affairs and Ecumenical Relations for the Moscow Patriarchate, since 1975, when he participated in an ecumenical colloquium at San

Anselmo in Rome. His preparation and training are excellent and he has expressed his openness to continuing the difficult dialogue. One should also mention Metropolitan Juvenaly, still very active in the Holy Synod, and well known for his ecumenical bent. Outside of Europe one could mention such outstanding figures ■ Archbishop Iakovos, for many years the guiding force behind dialogue in the United States, and Archbishop Stylianos of Australia, co-chair of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue.

We Roman Catholics miss the presence of seasoned experts like Cardinal Agostino Casaroli (former Vatican Secretary of State) and Cardinal Johannes Willebrands (former president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity), but, with time and experience, others will take their places.

We must also remember that the Orthodox Church is in a moment of great flux. Political, social, economic, even religious changes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have been occurring at an ever-quicken pace in the past months. In our dialogue with the Orthodox Church we must be aware of these internal changes and challenges. In March 1990, I participated in an official dialogue in Moscow between Pax Christi International and the Russian Orthodox. The main question that the latter must confront is, of course, how to re-evangelize a country when for 70 years they were without any means of teaching the faith or of social involvement - no schools, no hospitals, no universities. They must also learn how to adjust to ■ new moment when the Church will be a part of a more democratic process and not necessarily a department of the state. They must contend with a strong xenophobia among their clergy and the need for rapid expansion of already overcrowded seminaries and theologates. All these changes will involve attitudinal shifts among clergy and laity. It will not be an easy task to bring these changes about.

The Russian Orthodox leaders desperately need our support, both moral and material, and certainly our patience. Their credibility has been weakened in the eyes of so many - they know it well - by the compromises they had to make to remain alive during those 70 years. Furthermore, ■ spiritual awakening among their people has been accompanied by excessive interest in parapsychological phenomena, by outmoded concepts of religion and science, and by a search for pre-Communist roots and, thus, for religion, and a desire to be baptized without deep religious conversion. Evangelizing under such conditions, with few means and no recent experience, will be ■ formidable task for Orthodox Churches.

### Sources of Present Tensions

#### 1. Property questions

The Orthodox Churches are still harboring ill-will toward the Roman Catholic Church for having in the past gathered into its fold collections of Byzantine Churches, beginning with the Council of Brest in 1596. Ukrainian and Ruthenian Catholics have their horror stories to tell about what happened after Brest and subsequent unions, and the Orthodox have theirs. For two and one-half centuries, Byzantine Catholics in the regions of Eastern Poland, Eastern Slovakia, Western Ukraine and Belarus (formerly the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) have remained faithful to Rome and to their Byzantine traditions, in spite of the difficulties caused by Russian Czars, Polish and Austrian authorities, and Communist officials. There are said stories of

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persecution and violence on all sides and recriminations one against the other, especially during Communist rule.

Relations between Catholicism and Orthodoxy took a new course two years ago with the return of Church property to the Byzantine Catholics in Western Ukraine. These Catholics have been suppressed since 1946 but had managed to survive persecution and the worst kinds of Stalinist harassment. I was privileged to be in Lvov in August 1990 when Archbishop Vlodymyr Sterniuk, truly a martyr of survival, led throngs of our Eastern Catholic brothers and sisters in liturgical celebration of the return of the Cathedral of Saint George, which had been built by Catholics but had been placed in Orthodox hands by the Soviets. To appreciate the pulsating waves of joy that I experienced surging through the congregation that day, one had to understand that the Ukrainian Catholic Church had been declared non-existent for 45 years and was just emerging from the catacombs. The Soviet Government instigated in 1946 a bogus synod that handed over all the Catholic Church property to the Russian Orthodox, and banished the Ukrainian Catholic leadership to the gulag for imprisonment, torture and death. Similar suppressions of Eastern Catholics took place in Romania, Eastern Slovakia and other parts of Western Ukraine. In the eyes of Ruthenian, Ukrainian and Romanian Eastern Catholics, the Orthodox Church showed itself all too eager to absorb their parishes and parishioners.

In the past two years, however, there have been numerous reports of violence when church buildings and property were handed back to Eastern Catholics. Similar stories are now repeated with regard to the return of churches to Byzantine Catholics in Slovakia. It is difficult to obtain a clear picture of these accusations of violence, since most of them have not been verified. Above all, it is necessary for both sides to proclaim over and over again that such violence is out of place among Christians, regardless of where it arises. Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow have done just that and must continue to do so. It is also difficult for Rome or Moscow to control the local Churches when they act under the heat of passion and are strongly influenced by the mutual distrust that has been a part of their history for the past centuries. These are not excuses for violence, regardless of how easy it is to understand its origin. Both Churches must be severe in condemning any verified cases.

With the political independence of Ukraine we cannot predict how the relationship between the Orthodox Church in Ukraine and in Russia will work out, but the Russian Orthodox Church has much to lose because Ukraine was the source of many of its vocations and material resources. In addition, the Orthodox Church in Ukraine that is in union with Moscow is currently losing members to a new thriving ecclesiastical reality, the autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church. This is happening not only in Western Ukraine where the Byzantine Catholics reside in large numbers, but across the entire republic. This self-declared autocephalous Church, led by Ioann Bodnarchuk, formerly Bishop of Zhitomir and Ovruch, established itself formally during the Spring of 1990. For its Patriarch, the leaders reached out to 92-year-old Metropolitan Mystiyslav of New Jersey, who had been presiding over the larger of the two groups of Ukrainian Orthodox in the United States. His Ukrainian Orthodox Church traces its roots to a brief period of Ukrainian independence during World War II and then back to another brief independence during the Russian revolution.

When Cardinal Myroslav Ivan Lubachivsky (Major Archbishop of Lvov for the Byzantine Catholics) addressed the special Roman Synod on 9 December 1991, he referred to a meeting two weeks before at which representatives of all religious groups in Ukraine met in the first Ukrainian Interreligious Forum in Kiev. They agreed, he stated, to avoid confrontation and to focus on what unites them, because there are more causes for unity than for argumentation. We can only applaud such initiatives and be most supportive of them. They are encouraging examples for the future.

The major problem for the Orthodox Church in Ukraine may elude us Westerners. It is a question of the origins of Russian Orthodoxy itself. Since Kiev is historically the Mother See of Orthodoxy in Russia, this controversy could touch the tender nerve of religious self-identity for both Russia and Ukraine, and cause havoc, not only psychologically, but also ecclesially within all Orthodoxy, since it affects canonical matters and procedures. My heart goes out to those Orthodox prelates who must sort out the right way to process at this juncture of history.

## 2. The 'Uniate' question

Underneath these surface issues involving property lies a deeper difference between Rome and the Orthodox Church, namely, the very existence of Eastern Rite or Byzantine Churches in union with Rome. This question, called "Uniatism" by the Orthodox, much to the chagrin of the Byzantine Catholics who see this as a pejorative term, is the nub of the entire debate. The Synod of Brest of 1596 and subsequent unions still weigh heavily on the relationships between the Churches. Ultimately it is a question of divergent ecclesiologies and different concepts of Church structure and governance. Moreover, the way the Roman Church relates to Eastern Catholics is seen by many Orthodox as the model of how Rome conceives of ultimate union between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. For that reason the "Uniate" question must be studied and examined with clarity, forthrightness and humility.

All must accept the principle of freedom of conscience, not just in words but also in its concrete effects. The consciences of Eastern Catholics must be safeguarded and their history of sacrifice and persecution must not be made light of. Some Orthodox feel that Eastern Catholics should be given the simple choice of becoming Latin Catholics or returning to Orthodoxy. This would be a crass violation of their consciences and their special histories, and so the Orthodox must officially repudiate this naive position. Nevertheless, no union between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church is thinkable without first working out how it will be possible for Byzantine Catholics and Orthodox to exist in communion. This is the key issue that is now aggregated by the disputes over property and turf.

More than anything else, the Eastern Catholics must become an integral, essential partner in all Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue. They cannot be treated as pawns. Some of the present difficulties occurred because they were brought into the negotiating only at the last minute. We Catholics must first admit that any attempt to solve a local dispute in Ukraine or elsewhere cannot be made without adequate representations of all parties of the region, including Eastern Catholics.

Moreover, the Eastern Catholics must not be considered second-class members of the Roman Catholic Church. They have not always been treated as equals and their traditions have not always been respected. In the history of the Church in the United States there have been many such examples of abuse. There also remains some



justifiable resentment among Eastern Catholics of their having had to accept here such Western traditions as celibacy. Rome must refrain from any gestures that would imply a Westernization or a Latinization of Eastern Catholic customs. It must be a source of discomfort to these Catholics, for example, that the Prefect of the Oriental Congregation that deals with their affairs never seems to be one from their own midst, but a Latin. On the other hand, the Eastern Catholics themselves must do their best to avoid all signs of violence or misunderstandings and not add to the constantly growing list of grievances of a petty or unconfirmed nature.

Perhaps the main difficulty with the present circumstances of the Eastern Catholics is that their specific relationship to Rome is seen by the Orthodox as Rome's model for ultimate reunion. Although the contrary has been clearly stated by many participants in the dialogue, fear remains because no other model has been clearly proposed. The New Code of Canon Law for the Eastern Rites has already been seen by many Orthodox as reinforcing this Roman concept. It must be clearly stated by Rome that union with the Orthodox is not to be modeled after the present situation of the Eastern Catholics. The question instead must be: If union means a return to the style of relationships between the Churches before the great schism of 1054, what should we be doing to prepare for such an eventually? Rome would do well to articulate some positive response to that question to quiet Orthodox fears.

### 3. Proselytism

Another set of difficulties now exist between the Catholic and Orthodox. They involve charges coming largely from Russian Orthodox leadership. Last November, when Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow visited the United States, he complained on several occasions about activities of Latin Catholics principally in the cities of the Russian republic. At a luncheon hosted by Cardinal James A. Hickey in Washington D.C., some of us personally heard the Patriarch accuse the Catholic Church of setting up proselytizing groups to win over converts from Russian Orthodoxy. He criticized the Holy Father for appointing Catholic bishops for Moscow, Karaganda, Novosibirsk and in Belarus without any preliminary notification to the Holy Synod of Moscow. He called into question the efforts of Archbishop Francis T. Hurely of Anchorage, Alaska, who is working to establish an ecumenical center in Magadan along the Eastern Siberian coast. Some of these charges were reiterated at the special Synod in November 1991 by Metropolitan Spyridon, the representative of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

The Russian Orthodox leadership is uncertain of Catholic intentions. They know that, in the eyes of many citizens of the former Soviet Union and of Eastern Europe, Pope John Paul II is a special hero who helped bring an end to the grip of Communism. Now, as these territories are in economic ruin and as the Orthodox Church stands discredited for collaboration with Communism and is consequently ill-prepared for the new challenges (weaknesses which some critics consider as sound evidence for what they presume to be a general Orthodox inability to cope with modernity), the Catholic Church, in all its power and might, appears to be moving into Orthodox territory. Various Catholic groups (some of which John F. Long, S.J., our American elder statesman in Orthodox relations, has called "Fatima Fanatics") are establishing centers, training priests to be bi-ritual (Latin and Byzantine) and sending in scores of missionaries. The richer and more organized Catholic Churches in the United

States and Western Europe are seen as preparing to funnel thousands of tons of aid and specific expertise into Church affairs.

The Orthodox also see the vast incursions by Protestant fundamentalists and new religious movements from the United States: I know from personal experience that they need help in understanding who these people are and what they are about. More than anything, the Orthodox are seeking support from the West to reestablish themselves after a long and painful hiatus and are not prepared for such massive competition. They feel, if I might say so, toward these proselytizing efforts much as the Roman Catholic Church does with regard to similar thrusts in Central and South America by the same groups. At the meeting of the Orthodox-Roman Catholic Bishops of the United States in September 1991, we issued a joint statement that read: "Unfortunately, attempts to restore democracy have also given rise to types of proselytizing that do not respect the nature of the cultures and do not accept the historical Christianity present there. This Christianity is in need of the moral support and material help of Christian people throughout the world." The Orthodox rightly expect that the Roman Catholics, having declared ourselves a sister-Church to the Orthodox, will show by example that we are not acting like the fundamentalist groups.

In all honesty one would have to add that Orthodox leaders are also concerned about the peculiarly Polish twist given to these developments on the part of Roman Catholics. Poland, with a comparative abundance of clergy, has populated the parishes of Belarus; on 17 November, 1991, the Holy Father canonized Jozef Kalinowski, a hero of the 1863 Polish-Lithuanian uprising against the Czar, and all but one of the five apostolic administrators appointed for Belarus and Russia are ethnic Poles. The Orthodox ask with sufficient concern: what does the Roman Catholic Church intend to do in the Orthodox lands of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union?

In the meantime, Rome has appointed a Latin Rite bishop administrator of Novosibirsk, the largest city in Siberia. This was certainly justified for pastoral reasons because of the large number of Roman Catholics of Polish or German origin placed there in the 1940s and 1950s by Stalin. I am sure the Orthodox would understand the reason for this pastoral concern. A problem arose, however, because no dialogue with the Orthodox preceded the nominations. Having visited that in August 1990, I can attest to the existence of large groups of Latin-rite Catholics and the need for someone to coordinate the activities of the priests engaged in pastoral ministry to them. At that time, many priests were still responsible to bishops in Lithuania, Poland or Ukraine. Some still have very ambivalent notions about Vatican II and were reluctant to accept it. Although the need to take care of the Roman Catholics spread throughout the former Soviet Union exists and must be met, it must also be done in an ecumenical fashion so that the fears of proselytizing are not awakened.

One must also honestly admit that there are many converts to Roman Catholicism in Russia at this moment. Their percentage is small, however, compared to the vast numbers of baptisms taking place everywhere in Russia among the Orthodox. In Novosibirsk, on a Sunday afternoon at the Orthodox Cathedral, I saw people waiting in line for baptism just as they wait in line for buying in the shops. Thousands, I was told, are being baptized in a single week, and this poses a whole series of other pastoral and catechetical concerns. I also made a trip up the Ob River to the city of Tomsk, in



Siberia, where I observed the same phenomenon of many baptisms. There are good ecumenical relationships at the local levels between Roman Catholics and Orthodox, as far as I could observe. It is the responsibility of Rome and Moscow to encourage such dialogue and good will, so that all animosities are avoided, all fears placated, all competition avoided. Again the principle of freedom of conscience must be protected.

Finally, guiding principles for our charitable and service institutions that will be bringing aid to those in need in these eastern lands should be made clear and maintained so that such aid does not become unwittingly an instrument for competitive proselytizing. To avoid these problems, the Orthodox should constantly be consulted and their needs identified. In this way ecumenical relationships will be solidified, not weakened.

## Future Hopes

### *A new standing commission*

What is needed at this moment are signs of hope and good will. Tensions and complaints need to be organized into ■ agenda for calm discussion among the grieving parties and should not become subjects of point/counterpoint debates in the press. Rome and Moscow, rather than cease dialogue, must intensify it at this moment. Why could there not be a standing commission composed of members of both Churches to arbitrate these practical and concrete issues? Might I boldly suggest that such a standing commission be composed of representatives of the three interested dicasteries in Rome — the Secretariat of State, the Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Congregation for Oriental Churches — since often one receives different and contradictory vibrations from these three Roman sources. The Orthodox could be rightly confused and frustrated by such divisions. Such a commission must include local representatives from the region in which the grievances occur. The various Orthodox Churches involved would also have to identify and include local participation.

A new structure is needed because the present international commission for dialogue meets too infrequently and is geared toward more theological issues, although it wisely also includes Eastern Catholics in its body.

### *Dialogue in the U.S.*

Another sign of hope has been the dialogue in the United States. The theological dialogue between Roman Catholic and Orthodox scholars has been meeting here since 1965 — the longest of such dialogues in our present experience. This consultation has issued nearly 20 joint statements and next May will be holding its 43rd meeting. In addition to this theological consultation, there is the dialogue between Roman Catholic bishops and Orthodox bishops that has been in existence for over ten years. The trust and confidence that have evolved have permitted the scholars and the bishops to treat very sensitive and difficult issues with understanding. Only when such confidence is built up can the dialogues move forward.

Several aspects of the U.S. experience can be of help at this moment. The Orthodox in Eastern Europe are concerned about overlapping jurisdictions and find it difficult to conceive of several branches of Christianity operating peacefully in the same territory. The U.S. experience has shown that it is possible and, for pastoral care, necessary.

Currently, the Orthodox leadership in North America is struggling with its own coordination and distinctiveness. We, as Catholics, can hope that autocephaly for all Orthodox in North and South America will be granted in an acceptable way. When it does happen, our Orthodox partners in dialogue will have more reason to work constructively with us in dialogue.

We also have the opportunity in the United States of working with almost every branch of Orthodoxy that exists. Consequently, all the tensions find their echo here. In addition, we have representatives of all the Eastern Catholics and so we can see the whole of the Church at once. Dialogue between Orthodox and Roman Catholics becomes in the United States a microcosm of the dialogue throughout the world.

The new and unexpected historical circumstances in which these Churches all find themselves test our ecumenical endeavours. But they are also moments of grace since they force ■ to deal openly and honestly with so many issues that had been under the surface. One must take advantage of this *kairos* to create new and more solid relationships that can lead to unity in the future. One would hope and pray that we measure up to the moment and not become deterred by petty carping at each other or by the creation of competitive structures. We must expand our understanding of each other, especially among Orthodox and Eastern Catholics, and, thus strengthen our image of what the future could hold.

More than anything else, our priority right now should be to support all Church life where it has held on fragilely under extremely adverse circumstances, so that the term used to describe Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy — namely, "sister-Churches" — may be living reality and not a vague hope.



## COMMUNIQUE FROM THE CATHOLIC- ORTHODOX MEETING AT GENEVA, 2-3 MARCH 1992

### THE GENEVA DELEGATIONS

#### *Russian Orthodox delegation*

Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad

*Preesident of the Department for External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate*

Archimandrite Josif Poustoutov

*Advisor on Catholic Affairs at the Department of External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate*

Hegumen Nestor Yilaev

*Assistant to the President of the Department for External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate*

Archpriest Gueorguy Gontcharov

*Representative of the Russian Orthodox Church at the World Council of Churches, Geneva.*

#### *Roman Catholic delegation*

Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy,

*President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*

Bishop Pierre Duprey

*Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*

Mansignor Antonio Franco

*Nunciature Counsellor from Secretariate of State, second section (Relations with States)*

Monsignor Salvatore Scribano

*Member of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*

#### *The Holy See delegation was assisted by:*

Doctor Joaquin Navarro-Valls

*Director of the Press Office of the Holy See*

*Father Miguel Arranz, S.J., who served as interpreter*

On 2-3 March, ■ the initiative of both Pope John Paul II and of Patriarch Alexy II of Russia, ■ delegation from the Holy See, led by Cardinal Cassidy, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and a delegation from the Moscow Patriarchate, led by Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, President of the External Affairs Department of the Moscow Patriarchate, met together in Geneva.

#### *Working meeting*

This was designed ■ ■ working meeting, offering the two delegations the opportunity to study the difficulties in relations between the Catholic Church and the Moscow Patriarchate. As is known, these difficulties center on [the situation in] Western Ukraine. Difficulties have also arisen in other countries of the CIS subsequent to new catholic structures having been established there. In ■ spirit of sincerity and frankness, the two delegations discussed the facts that were laid before them.

Both sides noted that each had ■ differing understanding of these facts. However, through dialogue, each delegation had the opportunity to understand the motivations of the other party, and ■ come to better mutual understanding.

As far ■ concerns the situation in Western Ukraine and relations between the Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, the two delegations were unanimous in affirming that the principles drafted together in Moscow in January 1990, and subsequently approved by both the authorities of the catholic Church and of the Moscow Patriarchate, remain valid as the basis for any effort toward a solution. However, there remains a difference of opinion as to which is the most appropriate mechanism by which to put these principles into effect.

#### *Catholic structures in the CIS*

The Catholic delegation underlined that all the pastoral structures which had been established in the CIS were designed to answer the spiritual needs of Catholic faithful. The Orthodox delegation expressed the concern that such Catholic structures went beyond the genuine pastoral needs of the Catholic faithful, and betrayed ■ desire for expansion.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, and to develop confidence between the two Churches, the apostolic administrators and Orthodox bishops responsible for the same territory ought to consult each other before putting into effect pastoral plans, such ■ the creation of parishes or other works of the Catholic Church.

On these question, and on other points raised, ■ protocol for the meeting was drawn up and agreed by both parties.



## News & Views

### Eastern Orthodox leaders to meet: Peace, Love, Hope on Agenda

Primates of all autocephalous and autonomous Eastern Orthodox churches in Communion with Constantinople will gather in Istanbul, see of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, at the end of the second week of March to manifest Orthodox unity, strengthen inter-Orthodox ties and address a message of love, hope and peace to the world. Climaxing the event will be a eucharistic liturgy marking the annual Sunday of Orthodoxy, celebrated on the first Sunday of the Great Lent (15 March this year).

The presence of all fourteen primates at the gathering, called by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos, is unprecedented, says Georges Tssetsis, who represents the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the Geneva headquarters of the World Council of Churches. Envoys from Patriarch Bartholomeos, who was enthroned in November, have visited all the Orthodox churches in recent months to convey the invitation and gather material for the agenda.

Tssetsis dismissed as a 'false impression' the report in some quarters that the extraordinary gathering has been convened to deal exclusively with tensions among Orthodox and Roman Catholic in Eastern and Central Europe, though he said such points of contention and difficulties over uniate churches 'will certainly be discussed'. Also excluded from the agenda of the March meeting are topics previously placed on the agenda of the planned Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church.

Internal Orthodox unity is a critical problem in some areas, Tssetsis noted. Although a split between the Serbian Orthodox Church and a dissident jurisdiction in the USA has recently been resolved, divisions have arisen over canonically unrecognized claims of autocephaly in 'Macedonia' and the Ukraine and over the presence of 'parallel jurisdictions' in Russia, Greece and elsewhere.

With the fall of Communist rule, clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia - established in 1922 in Karlovci, Serbia, and later moved to Jordanville, New York (USA) - have returned to Russia and sought to establish their own dioceses parallel to those of the Moscow Patriarchate, claiming that it is they who have maintained the identity of the church during the period since the Russian Revolution.

Similarly, in Greece, the so-called Old Calendarists, who claim as many as 700,000 adherents, say it is they, rather than the Church of Greece, who have remained faithful to Orthodoxy since 1923, when the Church of Greece, like the Ecumenical Patriarchate and other Orthodox churches, adopted the Gregorian calendar - which this dissident group rejects as a Western invention, linked to the ecumenical movement. The Old Calendarists (who have themselves split into three or four groups) have a sizeable following among Greek immigrant communities in the US, Germany and Australia (where some staged protest demonstrations against the WCC's Seventh Assembly last year), as well as in Cyprus.

Tssetsis said the primates will probably also offer an evaluation of the ecumenical

movement and bilateral theological conversations in which the Orthodox are participating, make a statement about the witness of the church, evangelization in the world today and address concerns about creation, environment and contemporary moral issues.

Bilateral conversations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, interrupted by tensions over the uniate churches and charges by the Russian Church that the Vatican is engaged in 'proselytism' in its territories, are scheduled to resume in Geneva on 2 and 3 March. The Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches will meet next June in Lebanon. In a statement at the end of its last session (June 1990), the Joint Commission said the uniate question is 'an urgent problem to be treated with priority over all other subjects to be discussed in the dialogue'. It rejected 'uniatism' as a method of unity and recognized that existing uniate churches present some 'concrete points of friction' which need to be resolved.

Addressing a symposium in Rome on 8 February, Pope John Paul II expressed the desire for a resumption of full communion between the Eastern and Western churches and said it is 'very important that the problems existing between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church be examined anew' in the light of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome during the first millennium after Christ. Agreeing that such communion is desirable, Tssetsis says it can be established 'once the ecclesiological problem which is at the root of Orthodox-Roman Catholic separation is cleared up. But it must be communion with the Bishop of Rome, not under the Bishop of Rome, for each church of a given place, under its bishop, is the local expression of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church of Christ in all its fullness'.

Tssetsis linked a recent and unusually harsh attack on the Vatican and the Pope by the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece to centuries-old fears of Roman Catholic domination over all Christendom. 'The crusades, which caused considerable damage to the churches of the Orient, are still very much in the minds of many', he said. Also behind the statement, which described the Pope as 'neither sincere nor fraternal' and urged the Greek government to break diplomatic relations with the Vatican, was anger over the Pope's including 'Macedonian' among the languages in which he gave his Christmas greetings last year. Tssetsis says Greeks saw that as an endorsement of Macedonia's political independence movement, which claims large territories in Greece, including Thessaloniki, as part of a 'Macedonian republic'.

Asked about the synod's statement, a Greek government spokesman said the question of breaking relations with the Vatican was not being considered. A Vatican spokesman called the statement 'unfounded', describing it as reminiscent of 'prejudices expressed in circles outside of Christian thought'. [EPS]

### USA: Orthodox to resume membership in NCC (Tracy Early)

The Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the America (SCOBA) has recommended 'provisional resumption' of membership in the (US) National Council of Churches (NCC) by the five Orthodox bodies that suspended their participation last year.

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America announced in June last that it was suspending its participation in the NCC. The decision was



followed later by the Orthodox Church in America, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, the Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA and Canada, and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America (EPS 91.07.03, 11.45).

Approving a report of a Special SCOBA Commission on Ecumenical Relations, appointed after a vote to suspend membership last October, the Orthodox bishops took action at a meeting (19 March) at the New York headquarters of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America.

Greek Orthodox Archbishop Iakovos who chairs the SCOBA said in an interview following the meeting that the resumption would be provisional until 1994 when a final decision would be made. Meanwhile, SCOBA plans not merely to resume activity at the former level, but in a manner 'upgraded and more substantial'.

The day after the SCOBA decision, NCC general secretary Joan Brown Campbell led a service of thanksgiving at the New York headquarters of the ecumenical body. She said the Orthodox suspension had led her to believe more deeply that the NCC needed a 'transformation' to make it more consciously council of churches, with less of an 'agency' mentality.

In its decision to resume participation, SCOBA said 'We recommend a provisional resumption of our membership in the NCC on certain conditions, with a clear understanding of our past difficulties and with hope for the future possibility of the reunion of all Christians, ever vigilant and unified in our fidelity ■ the one true church'.

It listed the conditions: that the NCC publicly note instances when the Orthodox do not support ■ particular action, that Orthodox participation in the NCC be understood in light of the 1950 'Toronto Statement' of the World Council of Churches, and that 'our membership be always defined ■ a witness to our Orthodox faith, which ■ confess ■ the basis of Christian unity'.

At its 1950 meeting in Toronto, the WCC Central Committee reviewed a document ■ 'The Ecclesiological Significance of the WCC' and adopted it under the title 'The Church, the Churches and the WCC'. It helped overcome reservations by Orthodox and some others by explicitly renouncing any claim by the WCC to be itself a church or 'the' church, ■ to exercise church authority. To the Orthodox this means that a council should not be seen ■ 'super church' taking stands as an entity separate from the churches that compose it, and that actions by a majority of the member churches cannot bind the dissenting minority.

Paul Schneirla, an Antiochian priest who is SCOBA secretary and served on the Special Commission, said the Orthodox turned to the Toronto Statement ■ the suggestion of WCC general secretary Emilio Castro, who proposed it in ■ letter to heads of the churches that suspended relations. SCOBA named ■ committee of two Orthodox and two NCC representatives to update and adapt the statement for the current US situation.

The Special Commission reported that many Orthodox were influenced by 'misinformation' about the NCC stance on issues such as abortion, homosexuality and the Inclusive Language Lectionary, and noted that the NCC had adopted policy positions on none of these.

In listing reasons for resumption of membership, the Orthodox Commission

wrote: 'It does appear that the highest authorities of world Orthodoxy are counting on the continuation of our ecumenical involvement, which they consider as valuable on the world scale'. The statement issued by the bishops said that 'approval for the continued relations with the NCC according to the conditions contained in the report' were received from Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos in Istanbul.

In addition to correcting 'misinformation', the Special Commission admitted that Orthodox participation in the NCC had often been 'unrecognized unenthusiastic and unprofessional', and consequently ineffectual. SCOBA accepted the Commission's proposal to establish ■ ecumenical office with a full-time director to coordinate all Orthodox relations with the NCC. [EPS]

### **Ethiopian Orthodox Church to boycott AACC Assembly**

Constant rifts between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) and Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Church (COC) have prompted the Ethiopian Orthodox Church to seriously consider withdrawing its participation in the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) sixth assembly to be held in Cairo, Egypt later this year, reports the Kenya-based Africa Press Service.

The two churches have had a series of differences over the official status of the Orthodox Church in Eritrea.

According to AACC general secretary Jose Chipenda, the dispute worsened when Pope Shenouda of the COC ordained two monks, bishops Marcos and Makarios, into the Eritrean Orthodox Church without the knowledge and consent of the EOC.

Prior to the revolution which established autonomy in the territory of Eritrea, the Eritrean Orthodox Church was under the jurisdiction of the EOC. But today, the Eritreans seem to have chosen alliance with the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt.

'The Ethiopian church is protesting this alliance between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Eritreans', commented Chipenda, adding, 'the Eritrean Orthodox Church led by an autonomous Eritrean leadership has not been officially negotiated with Ethiopia...'

In a letter to the AACC, Teshoma Zerihun of the EOC said the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is not going to participate in the sixth assembly of the AACC since the assembly is made to take place in Egypt at the disposal of the Coptic Church authorities'.

Historically, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was part of the Coptic Church until 1959 when it was granted autonomy.

During his official visit to Ethiopia (EPS 92.01.46, 02.01), World Council of Churches General Secretary Emilio Castro held wide-ranging discussions with the Holy Synod of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. One of the issues raised by the EOC leadership was the deteriorating relations between the EOC and the Coptic Orthodox Church over the status of the Eritrean Orthodox Church. The EOC leadership urged Castro to help resolve the impasse. (EPS)

### **Eastern Orthodox Bishops meet, Unity high ■ Agenda**

The primates (chief bishops) of most Eastern Orthodox Churches held an



unprecedented weekend summit at the Phanar, the headquarters of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul.

During a concelebrated eucharist marking the annual Sunday of 'The triumph of Orthodoxy', a joint statement from the 12 primates present was read from a pulpit high in the patriarchal church.

Among other things, it criticizes what it considers anti-Orthodox activities by 'certain circles' in Roman Catholicism, mission activities in 'Orthodox countries' by 'certain Protestant fundamentalists', 'schismatic groups competing with the canonical structure' of Eastern Orthodoxy, any effort to replace 'Christian unity' as the aim of the World Council of Churches, and developments in the ecumenical context such as the ordination of women as priests and 'inclusive language in reference to God'.

It also calls on Orthodox to observe 1 September each year as a day of 'prayers and supplications for the preservation of God's creation and the adoption of the attitude to nature involved in the eucharist and the ascetic tradition of the church'.

Hailing 'Europe's journey towards unity', it notes the 'large number of Orthodox' there, especially in the east and south. In what has been Yugoslavia, it rejects the 'exploitation of religious sentiment for political and national reasons' in the 'fratricidal confrontations' between Croats (mostly Roman Catholics) and Serbs (mostly Eastern Orthodox).

The summit was called and presided over by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, traditionally 'first among equals' in the Eastern Orthodox hierarchy. The other primates attending were Patriarchs Parthenios (Alexandria and All Africa), Ignatius (Antioch and All the East), Diodoros (Jerusalem and All Palestine), Alexis (Moscow and All Russia), Paul (Belgrade and All Serbia), Teoctist (Bucharest and All Romania), and Maxim (Sofia and All Bulgaria); Archbishops Seraphim (Greece) and John (Finland); and Metropolitans Wasyli (Poland) and Dorothej (Czechoslovakia).

Invited, but unable to attend, were the primates of Georgia and Cyprus. The newly-revived Albanian Orthodox Church has no primate. The primates of North America and Japan were not invited. The independence (autocephaly or autonomy) of their churches is not officially recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and several other Eastern Orthodox churches.

The primates deliberated in closed sessions.

For ecumenical guests from Istanbul were invited and attended the closing liturgy - Armenian Patriarch Karekin and two other Oriental Orthodox hierarchies, and the acting leader of Latin - (Western) - rite Roman Catholics in the area. Eastern-rite Roman Catholics (generally called uniates by Orthodox, and the source of much of the current Roman Catholic-Eastern Orthodox tension) and Christians of other traditions were not among the official guests. (The primates noted, in particular, progress in dialogues with Oriental Orthodox, expressing hope for 'favourable result').

The annual Eastern Orthodox celebration of the 'triumph of Orthodoxy' recalls theological and practical decisions in favour of icons taken in the 8th and 9th centuries (icons). The liturgy concluded with a traditional icon procession. At one point, all the

primates gathered on a balcony in the Phanar complex and jointly blessed an applauding crowd in the courtyard below. [EPS]

## Orthodox Primates issue statement, Pledge to face Future Challenges

'Particularly severe and urgent problems' confront the Orthodox Church throughout the world today, according to the message released by the Orthodox primates at the end of their meeting in Istanbul (15 March). In the seven-page text, the church leaders say they wish to face the changes in the world 'as one body', looking ahead to the third millennium of the Christian era.

The present century, say the primates, has made it clear that human scientific and technological progress 'does not necessarily lead to happiness and the fullness of life'. Evidence for this is not only the collapse of Communism but also 'the failure of all anthropocentric ideologies'. A resulting 'spiritual void and existential insecurity' lead many to 'seek salvation' in new religious movements or 'nearly idolatrous attachments to material values'.

Global realities like these call the Orthodox to deeper unity, the message continues, but this is 'threatened by schismatic groups competing with the canonical structure of the Orthodox Church'. The primates say it is necessary for all local churches to 'condemn these schismatic groups and abstain from any kind of communion with them ... "until they return"'.

It is the Orthodox concern for Christian unity, the primates say, which has led them to participate in the ecumenical movement, convinced that they must contribute to the restoration of unity ..., bearing witness to the one undivided church of the apostles, the Fathers and the ecumenical councils'.

Against that background, they speak of their 'great affliction and anguish of heart' over 'activities absolutely contrary to the spirit of the dialogue of love and truth' in 'certain circles inside the Roman Catholic Church ... After the collapse of the atheistic Communist regime by which many ... Orthodox churches ... tremulously persecuted and tormented, ... had expected brotherly support, or at least understanding of the difficult situation ...

'Instead ..., the traditional Orthodox countries have been considered 'missionary territories' and, thus, missionary networks are set up in them and proselytism is practised with all the methods which have been condemned and rejected for decades by all Christians'. The message mentions in particular the activity of uniate churches in Ukraine, Romania, East Slovakia and the Middle East. As a result, the primates note, theological dialogue between Orthodox and Roman Catholics 'has already been restricted to the discussion of the problem of Uniatism until agreement is reached on this matter'.

The statement also describes as unacceptable the activities of 'certain Protestant fundamentalists, who are eager "to preach" in Orthodox countries', where 'the gospel has already been preached for many centuries'. It distinguishes proselytism - 'practised in nations already Christian, and in many cases even Orthodox, sometimes through material enticement and sometimes by various forms of violence' - from mission, 'carried out in non-Christian countries and among non-Christian peoples', which is 'a sacred duty of the church, worthy of every assistance'.



As to the World Council of Churches, the statement notes that the Orthodox do not 'approve of any tendency to undermine' the WCC's initial aim of restoring Christian unity 'for the sake of other interests and expediencies'. Singled out for disapproval among recent developments within the ecumenical context are 'the ordination of women to the priesthood and the use of inclusive language in reference to God'.

The message concludes by addressing some 'general problems of the contemporary world'. It says 'the accumulation of the privileges of progress and the power proceeding from it to only a section of humanity exacerbates the misfortune of other people and creates an impetus for agitation or even war'.

While noting the potential of genetic science in combating disease, it expresses concern about the possibility of its 'transforming the human being from a free person into an object directed and controlled by those in power'.

Criticizing 'the careless and self-indulgent use of material creation ... with the help of technological progress', which 'has already started to cause irreparable destruction to the natural environment', the message reiterates earlier calls from the Ecumenical Patriarchate to mark 1 September as an annual occasion for 'prayers and supplications for the preservation of God's creation and the adoption of the attitude to nature involved in the Eucharist and the ascetic tradition of the church'.

The primates hail 'Europe's journey towards unity', noting that 'the regions of South and Eastern Europe are inhabited by a majority of Orthodox people, contributing decisively to the cultural moulding of European civilization and spirit'. On the conflict between Serbs and Croats in Yugoslavia, the Orthodox leaders say that 'what is required from the ecclesiastical leaders for the Roman Catholic Church and from all of us is particular attention, pastoral responsibility and wisdom from God, in order that the exploitation of religious sentiment for political and national reasons may be avoided'.

Finally, the message speaks of 'all those people in other continents who struggle for their dignity, freedom and development within justice. We pray especially for peace and reconciliation of Middle East where the Christian faith originated and where people of different faiths coexist'.

The message concludes with an exhortation to 'the pious Orthodox Christians in the oikoumene to be united around their canonical pastors' and to 'all those who believe in Christ to reconciliation and solidarity in confronting the serious dangers threatening the world in our time'. [EPS]

## ECUVIEW: Serbian Orthodox Assembly of Bishops on Yugoslav Conflicts

[Deeply rooted memories of the past, ethnic, religious and confessional diversity and bewildering political complexity make the ongoing conflict in Yugoslavia difficult to understand for those from outside the Balkan region. Several times since fighting broke out, the 8-million-member Serbian Orthodox Church (since 1965 a member of the WCC) has lamented that its own position on the situation has not been given a fair hearing. The following excerpts from an urgent January session of the assembly of bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church provide some insights into how

the church views the sources of the conflict and what will be needed if a just peace is to be achieved. The unofficial English translation is from the Belgrade-based *The International Weekly*.]

During the two world wars, the Christian Serbian people was on the side of Christian Europe and the ally of democratic states, with which it gained victory over Europe's conquerors with heavy losses ... The Serbian people brought into the newly founded common state of south Slavs two of its until then independent states, Serbia and Montenegro.

However, for half a century now, it has been politically disintegrated, divided by enemy borders bisecting its live organism. The borders were planned by the Communist International, carried out by Nazi-Fascist and Ustasha occupation and reinforced and extended by Tito's Communist dictatorship through his extremely anti-Serbian Anti-Fascist Council of New Yugoslavia (AVNOJ), contrary to the will of the Serbian people. These borders divided the Serbian people worse than the Turkish slavery ... Neither the Serbian Orthodox Church nor the Serbian people have ever acknowledged the artificial and illegal 'AVNOJ' internal borders, which have no historical or ethnic foundations and were imposed by the despotism of the Communist guerrilla during the occupation and civil war.

The vast majority of the Serbian people have never been advocates of godless Communism of any form ... On the contrary, the Serbs were the first and greatest victims of their tyranny, and they have particularly been the victims of the Communist model of resolving the national question and the false picture of the Serbian people created in the international public by the very implementation of that model. The people which, together with its crucified Church, suffered over a million victims in the struggle against Fascist, Ustasha and Balist terror ... was never in the service of any totalitarian ideology, neither left - nor right-wing, for it has lived and died in the service of justice and freedom, peace and humanity and for its biological and spiritual survival.

Today, this people, for which there is no understanding, and which has been identified in Europe with its recent oppressors and their villainy, feels let down by even some of its traditional allies in the European Community and Christian Europe as a whole, and its confidence in the leadership of Serbia and the Yugoslav Presidency — and even more in the leadership of the Yugoslav Army — is seriously undermined.

The Assembly of the Serbian Orthodox Bishops rises in protection of the existence and fundamental national and civil rights of the Serbian people in all lands where it has lived for centuries and, with Christian honour, testifies in behalf of its spiritual identity and commitment to freedom, without posing a threat to the neighbouring peoples nor nurturing hostility towards them.

With all its heart and conscience, the Synod pledges itself for freedom and the right of the Serbian people in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Serbian Krajinas and calls on all factors in Europe and throughout the world to respect, internationally recognize and guarantee these rights.

Treaties with the power-wielders in Serbia, which do not have the authority to represent all Serbs, or with the bodies of the Yugoslav Federation or the command structure of the Yugoslav Army do not oblige the Serbian people as a whole, without



its consent and without the blessing of its spiritual Mother, the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Together with its faithful people, the Serbian Orthodox Church honestly and firmly urges the peaceful and just resolution of the Yugoslav crisis. This is why it fully supports the efforts of the United Nations to end the war and bloodshed and establish a lasting peace in the Serbian Krajinas and Croatia. In that sense, the deployment of international peace-keeping forces cannot be contestable. But they must not be used by anyone so as to prejudice political and state and legal solutions; they must be in the function of dividing the warring sides along the front lines.

The Serbian Orthodox Church expects and demands of the Serbian people in its Krajinas, where it constitutes the majority of the population, to respect the rights of the Croatian people and to feel pity for its victims in this tragic war, but it simultaneously expects of the Croatian people and the international community to respect the rights of the Serbian people and its victims in the struggle for freedom and for life worthy of man ...

We also support the demand of the Serbian people in Bosnia-Herzegovina that it be secured free life and independent political organizing in Serbian Krajinas. For, this people, which did not forget the genocide it suffered half a century ago, lives under the sword of Damocles today as well; it lives threatened that the very same genocide will be carried out against it again.

The Yugoslav Communist regime prevented the denazification of Croatia after the war and even banned the public mentioning of war crimes and genocide committed against the Serbs in Croatia and in Western Serbian regions ... The Serbian Orthodox Church does not seek revenge, although Cain still does not hear the cry of his brother Abel nor the reprimanding voice of God.

We Serbian bishops, headed by the Serbian Patriarch, simultaneously urge our people ... not to be discouraged, not to lose hope in God, who is alive, and in his truth and justice, nor trust in its own spiritual strength. For God is the God of justice and he is always with the sufferers in the name of justice. His word is the final word, not only in heaven but in history as well.

With fatherly and brotherly love, we call on all our people in Serbia and all Serbian lands and Krajinas ... to maintain mutual peace and brotherly harmony, the free spirit and national unity, humanness and tolerance, human purity and peace regarding its neighbour and all peoples without exception. We ask for truth and justice, peace and freedom, as well as genuine godly welfare and human well-being for all peoples alike, and, for our Serbian people. We ask for nothing more nor less than for our neighbours and all others.

God has entrusted us, clergymen, with the duty of reconciliation ... Let us all be 'one in Jesus Christ', as the Apostle says, let us be united in our struggle for God's justice and truth, let us be united against all kinds of evil and violence ... Now we, although unworthy, continue in your souls the work of the greatest Serbian peace-maker St Sava.

That is why our duty to reconcile should extend to the surrounding nations, first the Croats, then the Hungarians and Bulgarians ... Finally, we offer the pearl of peace to the sons of our common father — God — to Muslims of the Serbian language

and our centuries-old neighbours, Albanians. We all have a strong link in common — faith and one God. Faith obliges us to mutual respect and all-round humanity ... [EPS]

### Nationalist Tension impacting on Orthodoxy in Macedonia, Ukraine

Nationalist tension and moves for independence in the Southern Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in the Ukraine are having repercussions on Orthodox churches there.

Archbishop Milosev Gavril, head of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, unexpectedly announced his retirement in December. Poor health was the official reason, but some observers suggest that behind the decisions lay conflicts within the Macedonian church hierarchy over relations with the Serbian Orthodox patriarchate.

The Macedonian church declared itself jurisdictionally autocephalous thirty years ago, but this was recognized by neither the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, nor any other Orthodox church.

There have been recent initiatives by some Macedonian bishops to regularise relations with the Serbian 'mother church' in a way that would assure the Macedonian church's 'autonomy'. Gavril has rejected these efforts, charging those making them with dividing the church. He has also had difficulties with the Macedonian government, which has pressed him to relinquish his canonical responsibilities for Macedonians outside the country.

The autonomous Orthodox Church of the Ukraine, attached to the Moscow Patriarchate between 1682 and October 1990, is seeking complete canonical autocephaly from Moscow. The Orthodox church situation in the republic is complicated by the presence of an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church, under the leadership of Mstyslav Skrypnyk, which in 1990 declared its independence as the patriarchate of Kiev.

Skrypnyk's group, whose canonicity is not recognized by any Orthodox church, claims to comprise some 110 parishes; the autonomous Orthodox Church of the Ukraine has about 6000 parishes, according to its primate, Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev.

Following overwhelming approval of Ukrainian independence in the referendum on 1 December, Philaret has worked to overcome the nationalist split among the Ukrainian Orthodox. But it is not certain that the decision by the autonomous church to request autocephaly from Moscow will resolve the situation, given the fact that Philaret was on record earlier as having said that the Ukraine should remain within the Soviet Union.

An official of the Moscow Patriarchate, interviewed in the Paris-based Orthodox press service *SOP*, offered the personal opinion that there is no formal obstacle from the side of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Ukrainian request, so long as canonical communion is maintained between the two churches. The only problem, he said, would be in the southern and eastern parts of the Ukraine where much of the population is of Russian origin; and compromises about the language of the liturgy and the ethnic origin of the clergy would have to be found in those regions.

Meanwhile, in an interview published by the Italian Catholic magazine *Avvenire*,



Metropolitan Kiril, head of external relations for the Russian Orthodox Church, said the current disintegration of the Soviet Union, with worsening poverty and ethnic conflicts, is 'a tragedy from the social and economic point of view'. Unless 'a new way of living together' is found, he said, the country is headed for catastrophe'. (EPS)

### **Racism Alive and well in New and Old Forms, concludes Symposium**

A symposium on 'New Forms of Racism' held (4-6 November) at the United Nations European headquarters in Geneva/Switzerland under the auspices of the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR), heard that racism is alive and well in old and new forms and that nobody has a corner on racism and racial discrimination.

The meeting, which was attended by participants from 14 countries, including church representatives, heard and discussed papers presented by people from the United Kingdom, Kenya, Senegal, Canada, Japan, the United States, India, France, the Netherlands, Argentina and Ecuador.

The meeting presentations, using analyses, personal testimony and descriptions, surveyed a wide range of recent manifestations of racism.

The participants heard that discrimination related to colour, ethnicity and nationality is experience in Europe by migrant workers and new immigrants.

In Africa, the meeting heard, conflict and power struggles between ethnic or tribal groups within national states are rampant and are on the increase. These conflicts and resulting discrimination are intensified and complicated by religious tension between Islam, Christianity, and traditional African religions.

The meeting heard that the United States faces growing resentment among whites to the numerical growth and aspirations of African and Asian-Americans; Hispanics and other groups. Indigenous peoples in Canada and the United States face continuing pressure on their lands and new forms of rejection of their identity as peoples in relation to the land were cited as examples of racism.

Presentations from South America described the discrimination that results from the refusal to respect cultural and ethnic difference and the difficulties facing indigenous peoples.

The disadvantages experienced by workers from India in Fiji, the plight of Baraku people (a kind of caste in Japan) and the discriminatory results of economic development with its accompanying denigration of non-modern cultures in the Western Pacific, were some of the ongoing manifestations of racism described by Asian representatives at the meeting.

The meeting noted that manifestations of racism are increasingly complex because they are closely interconnected with many other factors such as the history of colonialism, economic development and disparities, the relations between men and women, and the concentration and use of power and religious differences. [EPS]



# THE STAR OF THE EAST

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